

Saturday 29 November 2014

Amateur Photographer



Fujifilm X100T
One of the world's best compact cameras gets even better

Passionate about photography since 1884

Creative wildlife lighting

How to use natural light to add impact to your wildlife photos

**Black
white**

See the **stunning
mono** winners of
APOY round 8



**Creating
fantasies**

The ethereal images of
Benjamin Von Wong
and **Sjoerd Stellingwerf**

PLUS Fascinating new pictures of North Korea • New budget remote flash trigger on test

At the heart of the image



Nikon School is a best in class photographic training facility located at our Nikon 'Centre of Excellence' in the heart of London, just two minutes from Oxford Circus. Equipped with the latest Nikon camera technology, the school is a creative, inspiring venue that gives rise to the best in photography. Courses run from Tuesday to Saturday and range from getting started with DSLR photography, to technique-specific courses and photography experience days. Book your course at nikon.co.uk/training.

 Nikon School at Nikon Centre of Excellence, 63-64 Margaret Street, London, W1W 8SW



COVER PICTURE © RICHARD PETERS

In this issue

10 Mastering the light

How to use natural light creatively with wildlife photographer Richard Peters

16 Mystical seas

Benjamin Von Wong explains how he created his breathtakingly beautiful underwater shots

23 The opaque state

Photojournalist Julia Leeb sheds light on the people of North Korea

28 Chewing Gum Bubble

From a simple sketch, Sjoerd Stellingwerf explains the process behind his image

34 APOY round 8

We reveal the winners of our night photography round of APOY 2014

41 Appraisal

Damien Demolder examines your images

48 Fujifilm X100T

Andy Westlake tries out the third generation of Fujifilm's X100 series with updated viewfinder and refined controls

54 Cactus Wireless Flash Transceiver V6

Callum McInerney-Riley tests the Cactus V6 that allows you to use almost any brand of flash wirelessly with any type of camera

61 Win a Leica M

Collect your last token for your chance to win a Leica M and 50mm lens

Regulars

37 days

19 Inbox

46 Accessories

57 Technical Support

90 Final Analysis



TO SOME, photography is a tool for observing and documenting the world, highlighting aspects of life to inform, inspire or surprise us, to make us question the nature of things, or challenge us to see them from a different perspective. On the other hand, photography can be used to create flights of fantasy that exist only in the minds of their creators, and which feed our imagination.

This week we showcase some great examples of both types. In the documentary corner we take a fascinating look at North Korea, a country we know little about, and see some wonderful wildlife photography from Richard Peters that reminds us what a beautiful world we live in. In the fantasy corner we have Benjamin Von Wong's exquisite, dreamlike images, while Sjoerd Stellingwerf's humorous creation shows the importance of having a great idea before unleashing the power of Photoshop. **Nigel Atherton, Editor**

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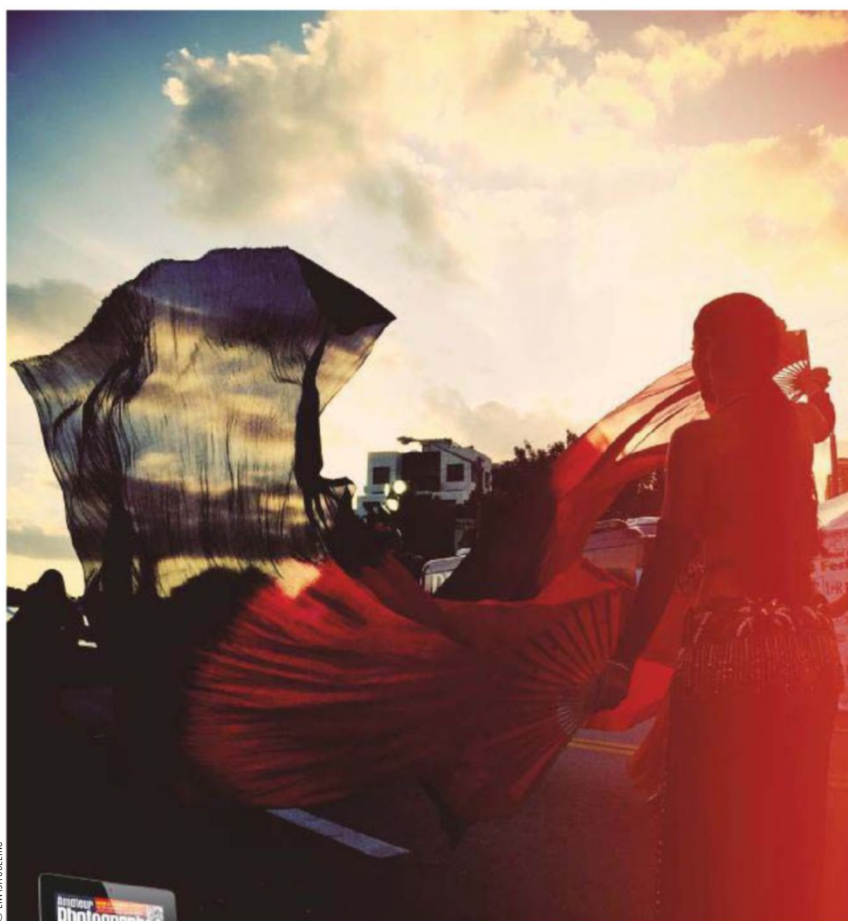


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ONLINE PICTURE OF THE WEEK



© ENVIJA COLLINS



Win!

Each week we will choose our favourite picture posted on the AP Facebook and Flickr communities and the AP forum.

The winner will receive a year's digital subscription to AP worth £79.99.

Untitled by Envija Collins

Shot and edited using an iPhone 6

THIS image of a dancer at the Hispanic Cultural Festival in Florida, USA, was uploaded to our Flickr page.

'I've been using a Canon DSLR for years and until now had never appreciated the images that I'd taken using a smartphone,' says Envija. 'I'd always seen them as snapshots of so-so quality. However, this image was actually taken using an iPhone 6.'

'When the official festivities of the Hispanic culture festival in Coral Gables, Florida, were done, the ladies from Belly2abs studio were still having fun just dancing around. I didn't want to show too many merchant tents and garbage cans all over the place, so I chose the setting sun and sky as a background. The photo practically made itself at that point. Once it was taken, I edited it using an app in the iPhone. It leaves me wondering how many other beautiful shots I've missed while figuring out the camera settings of my DSLR.'

Send us your pictures If you'd like to see your work published in *Amateur Photographer*, here's how to send us your images:

Email Email a selection of low-res images (up to 5MB of attachments in total) to appicturedesk@timeinc.com.

CD/DVD Send us a disc of high-resolution JPEG, TIFF or PSD images (at least 2480 pixels along its longest length), with a contact sheet, to the address on page 20.

Via our online communities Post your pictures into our Flickr group, Facebook page or the gallery on our website. See details above.

Transparencies/prints Well-packaged prints or slides (without glass mounts) should be sent by Special Delivery, with a return SAE, to the address on page 20.

NEWS ROUND-UP

The week in brief, edited by Chris Cheesman

Jessops trading

Start-up costs drove Jessops to a £2.1m loss for the 15 months to 30 April 2014. Jessops said: 'Significant investment was necessary to re-establish a nationwide retail business'. But as previously reported, once trading began on 28 March 2013, Jessops recorded an operating profit of £280,000 on sales of over £56m for the year to 30 April. For the six months to 30 April 2014, operating profit was £1.8m.



Canon lens

Canon has unveiled the EF 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS II USM, trumpeted as a high-performance zoom lens that is ideal for sports and wildlife photographers. The 'lightweight', redesigned zoom includes Canon's Air Sphere Coating (ASC) and a traditional twist-action zoom. The 21-element lens also features a '4-stop' optical image stabiliser, to help reduce camera shake. The lens costs £1,999.99 and is due out in December.



Ricoh Theta revamp

Ricoh has unveiled a new version of its Ricoh Theta camera. As well as capturing 360° stills in a single shot, the m15 is designed to create 'spherical videos'. The camera can create 3min videos 'with no stitch lines'. Ricoh adds that the Wi-Fi is nearly twice as fast as that of the current model. The Ricoh Theta m15 costs £269.99.



CSCs on a roll

Global camera shipments shrunk by almost a third in the first nine months of 2014, but compact system cameras continued to surge, says Japanese trade body CIPA. DSLR shipments fell 23.7%, compared to the same period in 2013. The number of CSCs shipped to the European market climbed 23.7%, while CSC shipments to American markets grew 13%.

Charity monkey

The iconic monkey selfie that triggered an international copyright row earlier this year is among images helping to raise money for the NSPCC. The famous image is among 130 prints – signed and donated by the photographers – up for grabs in a project to mark the 130th anniversary of AP. Visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk.



© PAUL COOPER

WEEKEND PROJECT

Self-portraits

If you enjoy taking portraits, but have run out of willing subjects to photograph, why not try turning the camera around and using yourself as the model for a change?

Generally, most photographers prefer to be behind the camera rather than in front of it, but there are many skills to be learned from taking

a self-portrait. Just to make things clear, we aren't talking about joining in on the unabashed selfie craze that is currently in full throttle across social media. On the contrary, this project involves creating a professional self-portrait image.

Just as you would when you shoot a regular portrait, good lighting and

composition are key factors to be considered when attempting a successful self-portrait, as well as a little bit of patience into the bargain.

Being both the model and the photographer at the same time can also mean it takes a little longer to set up and shoot, although arguably the results will be all the more rewarding for it.

BIG picture

There's still time to capture starling murmurations in the UK

◀ Starling murmurations can offer photographers stunning shots, as we can see here in this image by AP reader Paul Cooper. 'I took this shot in Aberystwyth in Ceredigion,' says Paul. 'My daughter had mentioned the murmuration of starlings that roost under the pier every evening, so I specifically walked along the sea front looking for them and found a good vantage point on a small jetty opposite the pier.'

'I decided to use the man in the composition to give some scale to the murmuration. I was particularly pleased to see how the man seems completely oblivious to the activity around him. I shot handheld, pushed the ISO to 2500 and opened the lens to f/5.6 to give me a speed of 1/500sec.'

Words & numbers

The whole point of taking pictures is so that you don't have to explain things with words

Elliott Erwitte
Magnum photographer

57%
Consumers who still buy a printed photo product, despite a boom in photo sharing over social media.

SOURCE: FUTURESOURCE CONSULTING



1 Your choice of lighting should be carefully considered. For a moody, low-key shot, try turning out all the room lights and close the curtains, then use a single off-camera flash or bright desk lamp to illuminate your face.

2 For a much softer, high-key effect, try placing yourself next to a large, bright window to take full advantage of the soft diffused light spilling in from outside. Alternatively, you could head outside on a nice day.

3 Investing in a wireless remote trigger, or even a cable release with a long-enough lead, will allow you to take the shot while comfortably seated. Or, you could 'cheat' slightly and ask a volunteer to press the shutter.

4 If your camera has a vari-angle screen, take full advantage of it by flipping it around so you can see the screen while in position. Then activate the camera's live-view mode to help you better compose the shot.

© TOM CALTON





Bryan Adams (third from left) and Prince Harry (centre) join British war veterans

© COURTESY SOMERSET HOUSE



Space camera price rockets

A SPACE camera that 'changed the way the Earth was viewed' more than 50 years ago has been sold to a UK collector for nearly three times its top estimate at an auction in the United States.

The Hasselblad 500C space camera was used by astronaut Wally Schirra, a camera enthusiast who bought it at a camera shop in Houston, Texas, in 1962, complete with an 80mm Zeiss Planar f/2.8 lens.

It sold to an unnamed space artefacts collector for \$281,250 (around £180,000), sending its presale auction estimate of \$50,000-\$100,000 into orbit.

Schirra (pictured above centre) is said to have carried the kit into orbit aboard the Mercury-Atlas 8 rocket mission in 1962.

Its previous owner had paid less than \$15,000 for the camera in 1994.

© BRYAN ADAMS

Prince Harry joins war photography tribute

PRINCE Harry joined rock-star-turned-photographer Bryan Adams to pay tribute to war wounded at the opening of an exhibition in London recently.

More than 30 portraits are on display at Somerset House, depicting British servicemen and women who have suffered life-changing injuries on military duty in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Prince Harry met war veterans before being given a private tour of the exhibition, called *Wounded: The Legacy of War*, a year after a book of the same name was published.

'The intimate portraits are striking and unsettling, since they do not shy away from the atrocities and aftermath of war,' said a spokesperson for Somerset House, where the show runs until 25 January 2015.

'In them, the inspiring individuals show the same spirit of resolve, courageousness and camaraderie in civilian life as in service.'

Bryan Adams began his photo career in the late '90s, having taken pictures on tour as a musician.

Addressing guests at the event, Adams said: 'This book and exhibition are six years in the making, and what was fascinating, but also heartbreaking, was hearing the



© BRYAN ADAMS



© BRYAN ADAMS

Bryan Adams' subjects included rifleman Craig Wood (left) and Corporal Simon Brown

stories of the servicemen and women.

'Most of us will not know what it's like to face the harsh reality of returning home from one battle, only to discover that another battle awaits – rehabilitation.

'During the course of making these photographs, I was struck by the great sense of humour that many of [the soldiers] have regardless of their circumstances.'

Adams recalled a story told to him by one veteran – a patient at the

defence rehabilitation centre, at Headley Court, in Epsom, Surrey. The veteran recounted how he used to 'hide the wheelchairs and prosthetic limbs of his comrades just to keep everyone's spirits up'.

Adams signed copies of his book, *Wounded: The Legacy of War*, proceeds from which go to charities BLESMA, Blind Veterans UK, Combat Stress, SSAFA and War Child.

AP interviewed Bryan Adams about his photography project last year.



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© DAVID TITLOW

The winning shot of the photographer's son, in Sweden

Musician wins £12,000 Taylor Wessing prize

A BRITISH photographer's portrait of his baby son being introduced to a dog has won the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2014.

Musician-turned-fashion-photographer David Titlow was presented with his £12,000 prize at the National Portrait Gallery in London.

The Taylor Wessing awards aim to recognise some of the most exciting contemporary work, emerging talent, established professionals, students and 'gifted amateurs'.

Titlow captured his winning shot after a midsummer party in Sweden – beating more than 4,000 other entries to the top spot.

Describing his winning portrait, entitled 'Konrad Lars Hastings Titlow', the photographer said: 'Everyone was a bit hazy from the previous day's excess.'

'My girlfriend passed our son to the subdued revellers on the sofa – the composition and backlight were so perfect that I had to capture the moment.'

National Portrait Gallery director Sandy Nairne praised the winning photo as 'fascinating and compelling'.

Titlow, a former musician from Halesworth in Suffolk, took up photography in the early '90s.

Laura Pannack won the £4,000 John Kobal New Work Award, presented to a photographer under 30, for her portrait of a young Jewish girl.

The winning images are on display at the National Portrait Gallery until 22 February 2015.

Nearly 1,800 photographers entered this year's awards, which are named after law firm Taylor Wessing.

Photo app to make 'every click count'

IN A WORLD awash with selfies and snapshots languishing on computers and smartphones comes a new photo-printing app urging people to make every camera click count.

Unlike most digital-camera photos, the captured images will not be visible to the photographer until they land on the doormat as a square-format print.

'No previews, no



cropping, no editing. You will simply capture the moment and savour the surprise when your photos come through your door,' states the app's developer, London-based technology firm Kite.

Marketed as a 'disposable camera for the digital age', ZenCam will provide users with a 'film roll', which is limited to 20 digital photos.

The app's developer hopes to encourage people to 'slow down and take better pictures'.

Due out in December, ZenCam will allow users to order two sets of 20 (3.7in x 3.7in) free prints per month, paying £2.49 for UK postage and delivery.

For the latest news visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Get up & go

The most interesting things to see, to do and to shoot this week. By Jon Stapley



DURHAM

Durham Christmas Festival

For the first weekend of December, the picturesque city of Durham comes alive with festivity. With a lantern procession, falconry displays and a tour of the castle on the offering, there will be no shortage of snap-worthy sights.

5-7 December. www.durhamchristmasfestival.com



© JEREMY WALKER

EVERYWHERE

Shoot winter scenes

Winter is nearly here, and the country is coming alive with shooting opportunities. Don't miss our 13 December issue, where photographers will be giving their best winter landscape tips. Also, visit our website and search for '53 projects'.

www.amateurphotographer.co.uk



LONDON

© DANIEL TUDOR, SPANISH

Photofusion SALON/14

This year's Photofusion SALON exhibition showcases work from 140 artists, whittled down from the 1200 images originally entered. There's no theme or principle – the only agenda is showing off good photography. Can't argue with that.

Until 30 January 2015
www.photofusion.org



© MARK LITTLEJOHN

LONDON

LPOTY

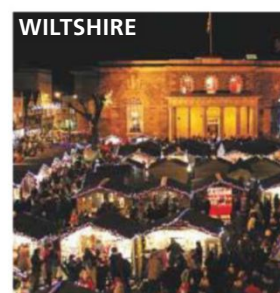
The upstairs of London's Waterloo Station gives way to spectacular landscape imagery as this year's Landscape Photographer of the Year exhibition sets up shop. It's a cracking selection of shots this year, including the ethereal winner by Mark Littlejohn.

2 December-31 January 2015. www.take-a-view.co.uk

Christmas market

As Britain heads into the festive season, look out for Christmas markets such as the one that has recently opened in Salisbury. There are different exhibitions, festivals and performances on every day, from displays in the cathedral to a torchlight procession in the final days.

Until 20 December. www.salisburychristmasmarket.co.uk



WILTSHIRE



Viewpoint Kirk Tuck

Now that most of digital photography's big technical challenges have been solved, can we be optimistic about the future?

Camera sales have declined sharply recently and I find myself wondering why. Smartphones have been gently eroding the market for the past four years, but why the sudden plunge? I believe that hobbyists have come to the conclusion that, after years of pursuing some sort of competence in the craft, they have reached a dead end. There's no real cheese at the end of the imaging tunnel. Pros take pictures to sell. Their motivation comes from trying to please clients – and getting paid. But hobbyists mostly have one feedback loop: to share images with like-minded souls and to bask in the glory of positive feedback.

In the early days, when images were being uploaded only in the low millions per day, there was a chance to stand out. But as the tap was removed from the plumbing and the pipes started delivering at full and accelerating capacity, the sheer number of images became overwhelming.

What's more, the feedback loop of learning about photography from your peers became nearly 100% efficient, so that

'Any unique vision is copied and disseminated in milliseconds'

any unique and singular vision is copied, disseminated and re-shared in milliseconds – the very hunger for approval fuelling the next wave of homogeneous vision in a cruel and immediate way.

I have now started hearing from friends about their hobby ennui. They're fully equipped but uninspired. They lost their photographic drive just as they attained all the technical knowledge one needed to produce a really well-done image.

Winning the battles

The hobby of photography from the dawn of digital to now has largely been about proof of mastery. In the early days, photographers were locked in a war against the stair-stepping and lack of sharpness caused by lack of pixels. Then 24-million-pixel sensors hit the market and part of the technical race came to an end. See how big I can print this? See how sharp it is?

The large contingent whose interest in photography comes from the technical challenge moved on to do battle against noise, driving the expansion of usable ISOs.

Every time the ISO scale gets ratcheted up, the noise comes roaring in and the noble knights of noise saddle up to do battle with noise reduction software, exposure schemes to the left or right and other fixes. It isn't about producing a wonderful image so much as creating a 'proof' that shows off the victory over noise at each setting.

Playing the same old games

Now that most cameras are equally good at exceeding all the measuring metrics that the coalesced hive have set down for 'good enough', the game is over. High image quality is now available to all, no matter what their tenure in the technical trenches. And when everyone is special, no one is.

To most people who took up photography after it became digital, the lack of new technical challenges equals having to play an old video game over and over, knowing exactly where the new lives are stashed and which key will get you the grenades.

So what's left? That's the question. Why photograph? What's my motivation? How do you measure success when everything, going forward, is subjective? What does the future hold for photography?

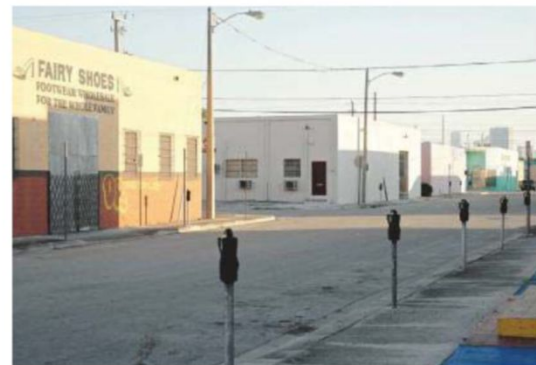
As pros adjust to the new economy, amateurs will return to more secure jobs and abandon trying to make a career out of photography. Those driven by technical quests will move to the next technical challenge and abandon old fashioned, non-moving photography. As the market for cameras declines, the rate of new product introductions will also decline.

Everyone else will re-focus from how to do stuff to finding that magic spark that makes us want to create for the sake of it. Instead of sharing with strangers endlessly, perhaps we'll return to a time when small groups and galleries helped to curate and add value to the practice of enjoying the image instead of sanctifying only the process, and the tools of the process. That, in my view, would be the silver lining.

Kirk Tuck is a pro photographer and author based in Texas, USA. This column was condensed from an article on his blog at visualsciencelab.blogspot.com

New Books

The latest and best books from the world of photography. By Oliver Atwell



Stormbelt

By Robert Leslie, Dewi Lewis, £30, hardback, 120 pages, ISBN 978-1-90789-347-6

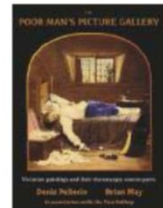


THIS book represents either a serious blip in the West's economic history or it marks the unravelling of the fabric of the structures that underpin our society. The fact that Leslie is

able to do this through a series of hauntingly beautiful landscapes is pretty miraculous. How exactly does one chart such an event? In the hands of a less skilled practitioner, we might be faced with something more heavy-handed – perhaps treading the beaten ground of works gone by. The obvious emulation would be the work produced by Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans. But the success of *Stormbelt* is that Leslie has avoided producing a book that beats us across the head with end-of-times prophecies and melancholic tableaux. In fact, he has managed to capture the eerie silence of economic entropy. ★★★★★

The Poor Man's Picture Gallery: Stereoscopy versus Paintings in the Victorian Era

By Denis Pellerin and Brian May, The London Stereoscopic Company, £45, hardback, 208 pages, ISBN 978-0-95742-461-6



THE ADVENT of photography brought art to the people. Through myriad photographic reproductions of significant paintings, the general public could view works they did not have the financial means (or class) to access. Before photography, art appreciation was an elite pursuit.

Reproductions changed all that and stereoscopic images played a huge part. Enterprising photographers reconstructed the painted scenes with sets and actors, and gave the man on the street access to the world that had previously been denied them. This book is full of stunning printed reproductions and compares them with the related stereo cards, which are designed to tell the same stories as the paintings. As history, this tells a fascinating tale. As a photography book, it is a stunningly packed achievement. ★★★★★

Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send us your thoughts in around 500 words to the address on page 20 and win a year's digital subscription to AP, worth £79.99

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© HEATHER ANGEL

Due to popular demand, on **Wednesday 11 February 2015** we are delighted to welcome back **Heather Angel**, the renowned wildlife photographer with a passion for plants, mammals

and macro photography.

See how reflectors, diffusers and fill flash help to improve macro shots in the field. Discover how to gain arresting macro still-life shots with

simple lighting – including window light, LED lights, fill flash and a light box. Examples of how depth of field is enhanced using focus stacking will also be shown and explained.

This exclusive seminar is held at the home of **Amateur Photographer** and **What Digital Camera** in the Blue Fin Building, rising above the impressive skyline of London's South Bank.

Tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis at £39 per head, to include a presentation and Q&A session with Heather Angel from 6pm-8.30pm.

For full details visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/macro or call 0203 148 4326

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Richard Peters

Richard Peters is a UK-based wildlife photographer whose passion stems from watching natural-history documentaries as a youngster. Now his photos and writing are published regularly, and his images have won awards in numerous worldwide competitions. www.richardpeters.co.uk



The far hillside helped produce a beautiful dark background to this sidelit puffin
Nikon D800, 200mm + 2x converter,
1/1600sec at f/5.6, ISO 900

ALL PICTURES © RICHARD PETERS

As a photographer, it's very easy to fall into the trap of thinking to yourself that the light isn't very good. However, the truth is that all light is good for *something*. But putting that thought aside, even when the sun is out and everything is bathed in light, it's just as easy to miss beautiful shots that are staring you in the face as it is to pack up because the light is dull. Simply put, get the sun off your back. What do I mean by that? Well, when the light is good and the subject is perfectly lit, don't get caught up with filling a memory card with front-lit images. Where possible, move around your subject. Shooting in this way will drastically improve your understanding of exposure while also giving your portfolio some beautiful variation as you start to explore shape and form.

Lighting techniques

Once you start to light your subject from different directions, which is essentially what



KIT LIST

DSLR ▶

Cameras such as the Nikon D810 offer a number of metering modes.



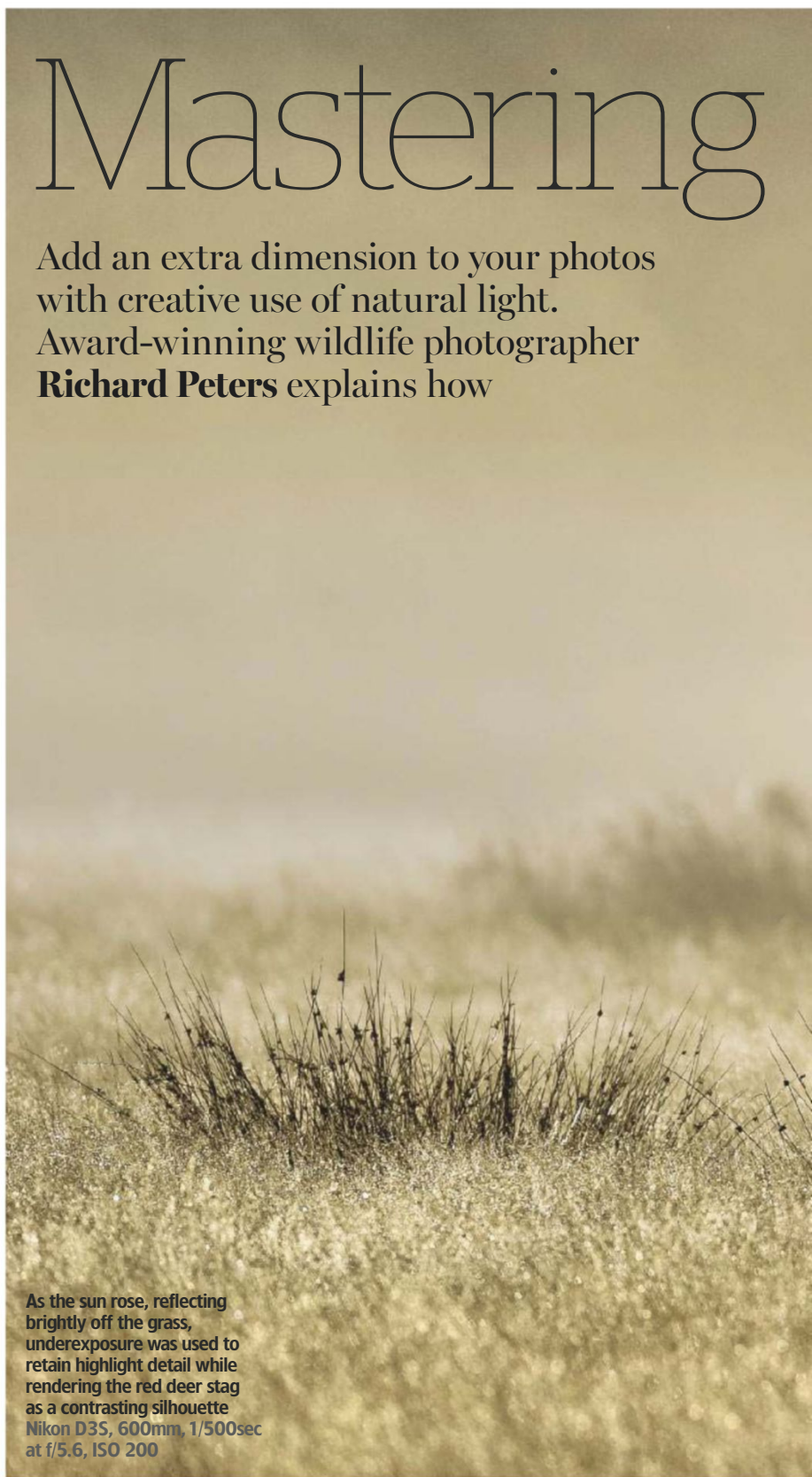
Telephoto lens ▶

A 300mm f/2.8 is a popular middle-range wildlife lens. Using a compressed perspective and shallow depth of field can further emphasise the way the light hits your subject.



Mastering

Add an extra dimension to your photos with creative use of natural light. Award-winning wildlife photographer **Richard Peters** explains how



As the sun rose, reflecting brightly off the grass, underexposure was used to retain highlight detail while rendering the red deer stag as a contrasting silhouette
Nikon D3S, 600mm, 1/500sec
at f/5.6, ISO 200

the light



Tripod ►

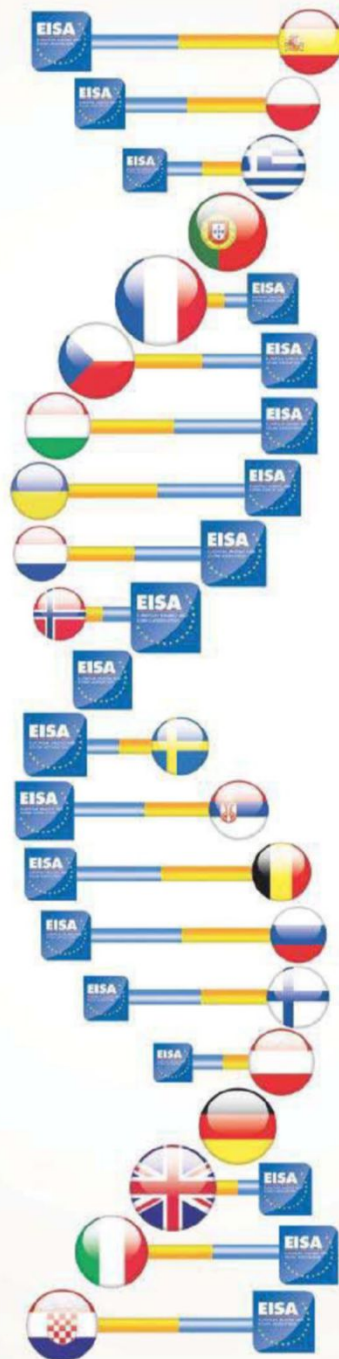
When working with long lenses and tricky lighting, a tripod ensures that your images remain sharp if your shutter speed starts to fall.



White balance

As these lighting techniques more often than not lend themselves to sunrise and sunset shooting, take your camera out of auto, as this often has a bias towards a cooler blue colour. Instead, set it either to cloudy or a manual setting of around 6,000K and above. This will help retain and emphasise any warm tones.

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Understanding metering modes

Most DSLRs, in their standard set-up, will always try to produce an average exposure that has both shadow and highlight detail. Virtually all DSLRs feature a variation of metering modes, which essentially help in exposing for a variety of lighting. Depending on the camera system you shoot with these will go by different names, but the basic three modes are:

Matrix/evaluative

This is the standard mode on all cameras, where the metering will read the entire image and try to get a balanced exposure. It's good when the entire frame is evenly lit, but less so when trying to get creative.

Centrewighted

With centrewighted, the camera will read the light across the entire frame but will bias the exposure for the middle of the frame. More feature-packed models will also allow you to change the size of the area in the middle of the frame should you wish.

Spot

This mode is very useful if you are shooting a bright subject on a dark background. The metering system takes its reading from the immediate area surrounding the focus point you have selected. It is useful if you have a bright subject on a dark background, but it can be tricky with subjects that move a lot.

The latest cameras

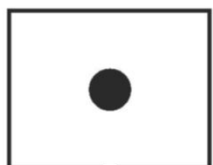
DSLRs such as the Nikon D810 also feature a new mode called highlight weighted. This reads the entire frame, much like matrix/evaluative metering, but automatically exposes for the highlights without the user having to ensure the focus point is placed over the bright area of the image. Think of it as intelligent spot metering.



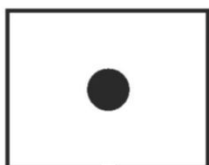
Matrix



Centre



Spot



Highlight



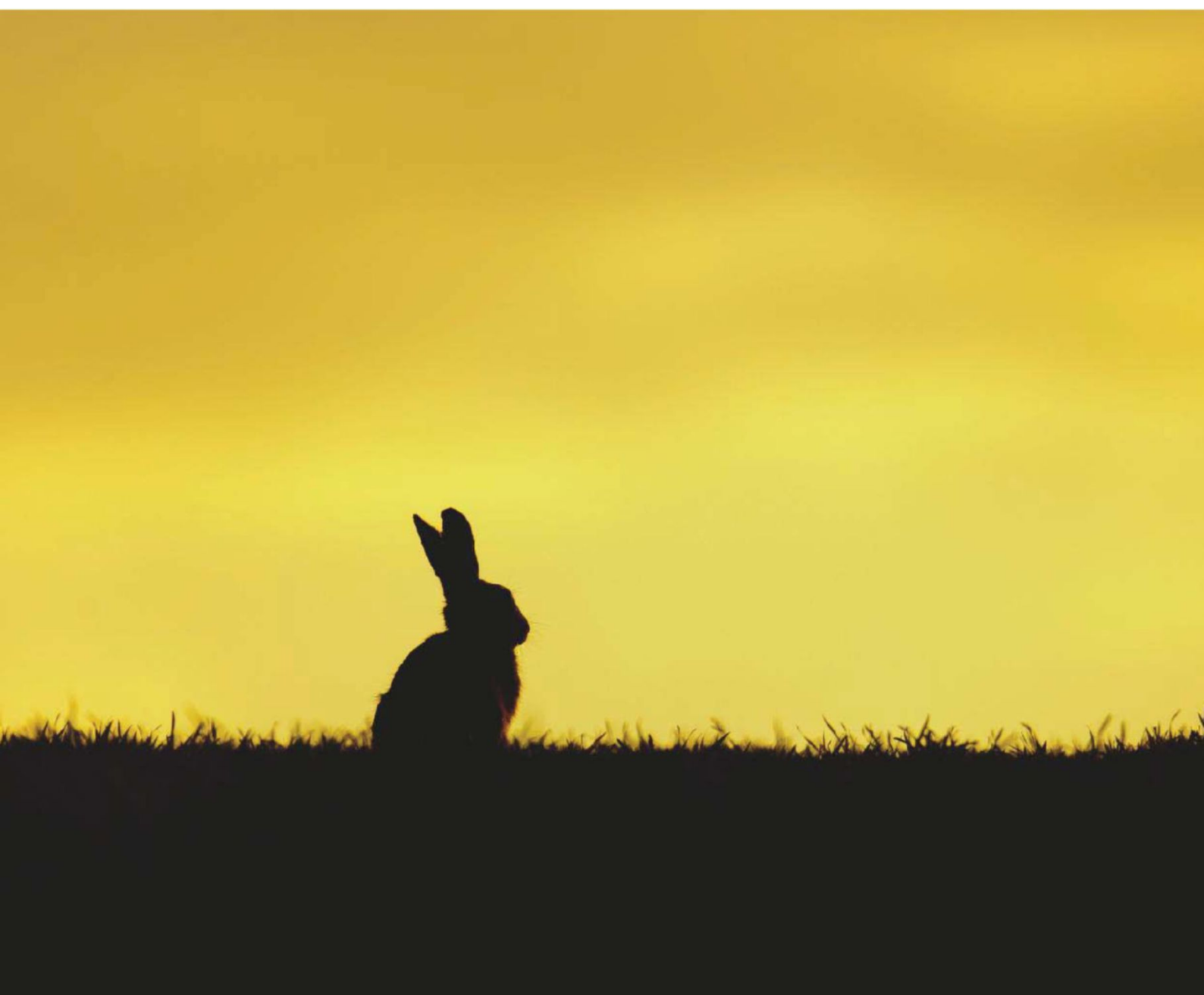
First light in the forest has lit this red squirrel perfectly
Nikon D4, 200-400mm, 1/1000sec at f/5.6, ISO 200

you're doing by shooting from different angles, you start to introduce greater variation in dynamic range across the frame as highlights get brighter and shadows get darker. That may sound like it's getting technical, but it's essential to know because it is this variation in dynamic range, and knowing how to expose for it, that will allow you to get more creative with the light. But to bring it back to its simplest form, the aim is to try two things: backlight and sidelight.

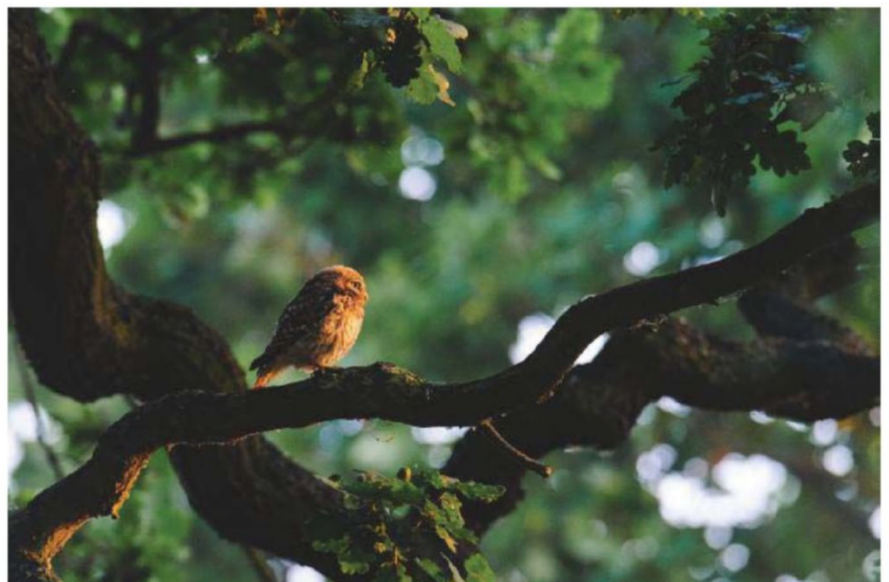
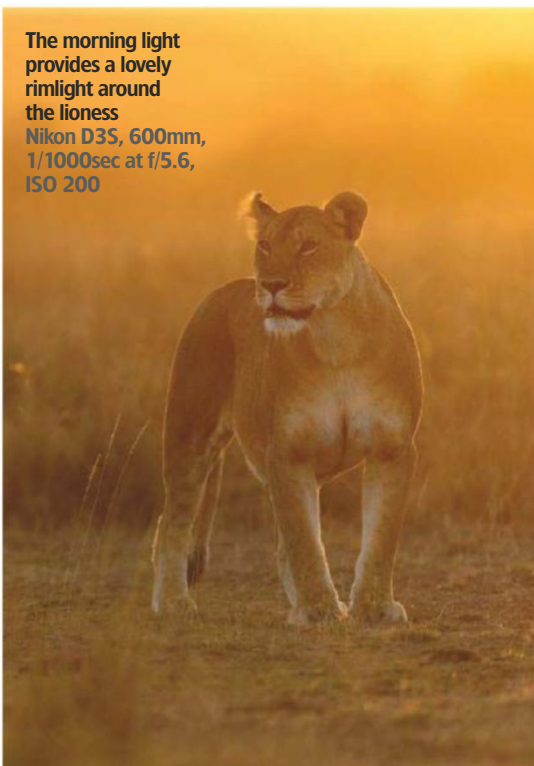
Backlighting is achieved by placing the subject between yourself and the sun, and shooting *towards the light*. This opens up several creative opportunities that simply aren't available when you have the sun to your back and the subject is front lit. This technique can produce a wonderful golden glow to the overall scene. It is most easily achieved at sunrise or sunset by ensuring

the sun is just out of frame, so that its light is filtering across the image. The correct exposure – one that is not over or underexposed – should result in beautiful golden tones. However, it's important to remember that while you do not want the sun in the frame, the further away from the edge of frame the sun is, the less intense the warm tones. This effect can be further enhanced if it's a misty morning or the subject has visible breath, which will provide more atmosphere and an extra element of interest.

Backlighting is also very good for creating silhouettes. Typically, this may require some underexposure when compared to the evenly lit, warm-toned look. However, silhouettes can work equally well by waiting for the sun to be a little higher in the sky, again keeping it out of frame. This



The morning light provides a lovely rimlight around the lioness
Nikon D3S, 600mm, 1/1000sec at f/5.6, ISO 200



Sidelight has emphasised this little owl sunning itself at the end of a night of hunting to feed its young
Nikon D3S, 600mm, 1/200sec at f/5, ISO 2800

Side VS even light

The effects of directional light, and where you place yourself relative to that, can transform any subject from dull and boring into a more interesting and evocative subject. This is immediately obvious when comparing the two images below. In the first shot, the sun is behind a thin covering of cloud, lighting the image evenly. It has produced a nice image, but one that lacks any punch or visual interest.

The second image was taken with the sun unobstructed by clouds. It's low in the sky and coming in from the left of the frame. The camera wants to try to even out the exposure in situations like this, which would result in a higher ISO and overexposed subject in order to balance out the background. However, by applying some exposure compensation, the pigeon is exposed correctly, which has thrown the background into darkness. The sidelight has given some nice contour detail to the pigeon and ultimately produced a far more pleasing image. The same result can also be achieved in many situations like this by spot metering the subject.

While lit evenly, the shot lacks drama
Nikon D4, 600mm,
1/1250sec at f/5.6,
ISO 3200



Even light

Side lighting is much more pleasing
Nikon D4, 600mm,
1/1000sec at f/7.1,
ISO 200



Side light

By shooting uphill, this hare has been silhouetted against the intense glow of the setting sun. A hint of sidelight gives some form to the silhouette
Nikon D3S, 600mm,
1/1250sec at f/5, ISO 200

➤ will provide good light on the surroundings while the underexposure will create a silhouetted subject.

One step further

Rimlight is a by-product of backlight and takes the silhouette one step further. In its simplest form, it is when the light catches on the edges of your subject so they are much brighter than the area of the subject that isn't in direct light. However, to really push the effect to its maximum, it can be used to create an outline of the subject on a black background. In order to achieve this, the sun needs to be close to, but outside of, the frame and low in the sky so that the foreground and background are lit as little as possible. Shooting with the sun just above a distant tree line, for example, helps to ensure everything except the subject is rendered black when you expose only for the rimlight outline. Typically, the exposure for a shot like this could be anywhere

from 1 stop to 3 or 4 stops underexposed, but they are easy to master when the conditions allow.

Finally, sidelight can be a really nice way to show off texture and contours in a really dramatic way. With the light only falling on some areas of the subject, you can get some truly beautiful contrasts between light, bright detail, and areas of darkness and shadow. Also, depending on how far round the light is in relation to the animal, sidelight can be used to almost completely light a subject or throw it mostly into shadow, giving a plethora of creative looks. Some underexposure is generally required because you need to expose for the parts of the frame that fall in direct light.

Manual metering

All these types of light are related, with sidelight feeding into backlight, which then feeds into rimlight. But learning the various exposure modes your camera has to offer,

and when to use them to master these lighting techniques, will quickly help you get on your way towards mastering the light. However, these modes aren't foolproof and the camera is still essentially guessing what you want to achieve. The ultimate way to achieve your desired results is to tell the metering system what you want to do. And that's where manual exposure and exposure compensation become essential, as they will let you get the exposure just how you want.

The important thing to remember is that most creative uses of light require an exposure that is the average meter reading of the entire scene, so don't be alarmed when your camera is telling you to brighten or darken the exposure. Take the shot anyway and work from there. Once you start to experiment more, you'll quickly find yourself instinctively looking through your viewfinder and knowing how much exposure compensation you need to achieve the creative shot you're after.



Mystical seas

By Benjamin Von Wong

Benjamin Von Wong explains how he created a series of breathtakingly beautiful underwater shots at a Bali shipwreck. He talks to **Jade Severs**

My trip to the Indonesian island of Bali, to shoot at the Tulamben shipwreck, actually started off as a family holiday. My mum had been badgering me to take some time off, so I finally said I would – with the proviso that she would allow me to do a diving class and get my open-water divers' licence. Of course, being a photographer, I couldn't let the opportunity to do a photo shoot slip by.

I had shot underwater before, but only within the confines of a swimming pool. This had already prepared me for the fact that everything is more complicated underwater. Knowing this, it was vital that I had a strong team around to help me pull off this shoot.

Before I went to Bali, I contacted Bali-based underwater photographer and dive instructor Chris Simanjuntak, who was instrumental in helping me put this shoot together. We had just four days to make it work, so from the moment I arrived I sat down with Chris and we began to bring my vision to life.

There were several challenges we faced when it came to planning the actual shoot, which would take place at a depth of 25 metres and involve the models being tied to the shipwreck. We couldn't use regular models, unless they had extensive dive training, and even then, they wouldn't have

the ability to hold their breath for very long. Therefore, free divers were going to be needed. We had to find a designer willing to part with clothing despite the fact that seawater would ruin the clothes. Normal assistants also wouldn't work, so specially trained safety divers were going to be necessary.

Scouting would also be complicated – local divers would be needed for us to navigate around the Tulamben wreck and deal with unpredictable changes in the weather and tide. Finally, lighting gear would be limited, so that meant we had to work with what we had available – on-camera strobes or natural light.

Fortunately, Chris had access to divers and the equipment needed to bring this shoot to life. We even had a high-end fashion designer provide us with some of his older runway designs, which fitted the bill perfectly.

On the day of the shoot, I had a team of seven divers and two experienced free divers, who were capable of holding their breath underwater for more than 3mins, acting as models. Shooting underwater was every bit as challenging as I had remembered it to be, as everything is complicated and slow. When you are underwater you have to think about so many issues, such as communication, breathing and safety.

Shooting with a Nikon D90 and a 12-24mm f/4 lens in an Aquatica housing, the



© BENJAMIN VON WONG

wideangle lens ensured that we could capture the environment to tell a story. I made sure that the foreground, centre and background elements were within the composition, and focused on the emotion of the models, so people would wonder where they were headed in this shipwrecked environment.

I also learned from Chris that I would be able to use ISO 400 at f/4, with a minimum shutter speed of 1/50sec across most of the shipwreck, with nothing but ambient light. This exposure

setting ensured that the images weren't blurry or grainy. I did initially try using some strobe lighting, but it was incredibly heavy and because I was an inexperienced diver I just started to sink. Not only that, but the foreground objects were oddly brighter and properly coloured in contrast to the background objects. So I decided to keep things simple. If we needed light, we just turned the models' faces towards the available ambient light.

One of the challenges of



Benjamin Von Wong

Benjamin Von Wong is a visual engineer and multimedia content creator based in Ontario, Canada. His hyper-realistic art style captures viewers in a fusion of special effects and innovative concepts. See more at www.vonwong.com



shooting underwater is that the deeper you get, the more desaturated everything becomes. Thankfully, with a couple of adjustments in post-production using Colour Balance, Curves and Selective Colour, as well as some dodging, burning and careful masking, I was able to paint back colour and tones into my image.

For me, the joy of shooting underwater was that the whole situation was just so magical. You have this ethereal scenario going on 25 metres under the

ocean's surface, where even the sight of three divers escorting a model through a shipwreck in a beautiful white dress with flowing hair is magical, so you can imagine what it was like shooting it. It was really fun seeing the pictures come up on the computer screen afterwards. To see these shots come to life as you play with the contrast and bring some life back into the images, making them look like what you had in your head, is mind-blowing.



3 TOP TIPS FOR UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY

Benjamin Von Wong's top three tips for photographing creatively underwater

1 Buy a waterproof camera housing

A waterproof camera housing needn't be expensive. Try DiCAPac, which will house a full-frame DSLR and lens.

2 Understand how water affects light

The deeper you go, the less light you will have available and the more blue your

images will appear as water filters out the red spectrum. Stay close to the surface for the best skin tones.

3 Plan for time

Everything is more complicated underwater, such as framing, focusing, breathing, directing, changing settings and moving lighting. Allow for everything to take three times longer.

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

The magic of film photography


We know that in an overcrowded photo-magazine market, AP holds a unique place. And Andrew Sanderson's excellent article on processing film (AP 1 November) is just one of the reasons why. With AP's championing of classic film cameras and analogue photography as a whole, I can't think of another publication that still values the use – not to mention the skills – of processing and printing black & white photos under the cosy glow of a darkroom safelight.

It's a pastime I'm loath to abandon as there's simply no digital equivalent to seeing an image magically appear in a dish of developer. Imagine those early photographic pioneers watching spellbound as they witnessed this almost witchcraft-like experience for the first time. We live in an age where digital photography –

as a craft – and its mind-blowing technology never ceases to astound us. That's what goes through my mind whenever I pick up my Nikon D3300. But there are days – weeks even – when all I desire is my battered old Olympus OM-1n and a few rolls of black & white film. It isn't nostalgia. It's simply a love of film photography that will stay with me until the sad day when film is no longer available. That truly will be the end of an era!


Mick Bidewell, Tyne and Wear

The thrill of watching an image appear in the developing dish is one that has no equal in digital photography, and long may it continue to be available to future generations who want to try it, even if it will never be their primary method of image creation – Nigel Atherton, Editor



Win!

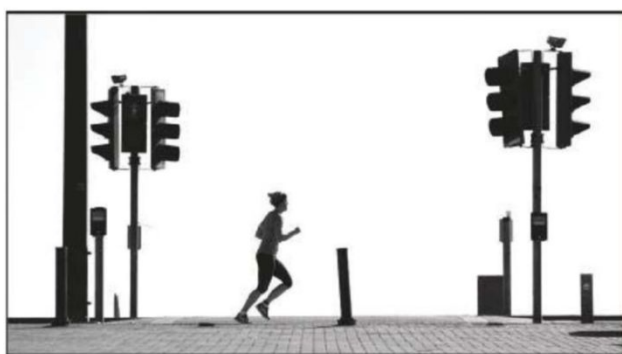
With ultra-fast performance, the new Samsung 16GB EVO SD card, Class 10, Grade 1, offers up to 48MB/sec transfer speed and has a ten-year warranty. www.samsung.com



No absolutes

I suspect I won't be the only one to notice that on page 36 of AP 15 November, Damien Demolder criticises Graeme Youngson's photographic silhouette because it 'simply doesn't appear natural or believable', yet five pages earlier you print a René Burri photograph that is conceptually almost identical as an example of his best work. Both photos feature street furniture and both feature a person taking exercise and both have a completely plain background.

Of course, there is plenty of room within this hobby for different opinions (thankfully), but Mr Demolder's choice of words rather suggests that his opinion is actually a statement of fact, which surely cannot be the case in such a subjective arena. I'm reminded of a photograph that I entered into two different competitions at my local camera club – one judge said that it would be



A natural silhouette, or simply not believable? It's a matter of opinion

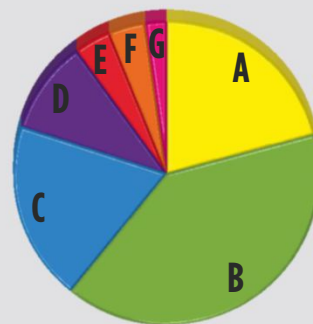
greatly improved were I to get rid of the left-hand side of the picture, but in the opinion of the next judge I needed to crop out a large chunk of the right-hand side!

I think that the above illustrates that there can be no absolutes in this hobby and we should all be careful to bear such in mind.

For what it's worth, by the way, I much prefer the original version of Graeme Youngson's photo. **Roger King, Essex**

More diversity, please!

Like fellow reader Chris Glass (*Inbox*, AP 1 November), I too remember the seedy Vaseline-smearing images of oiled-up women in cheap lingerie that graced the pages of AP back in the 1980s. These were particularly embarrassing for me because, as a keen ten-year-old photographer back then, I liked to take my copies of AP into school with me. Let me tell you, I had all sorts of conversations



In AP 8 November, we asked...

How old were you when you first took up photography?

You answered...

A Under 10 years old	21%
B 10-15 years old	40%
C 16-20 years old	19%
D 21-30 years old	10%
E 31-40 years old	4%
F 41-50 years old	4%
G 50+ years old	2%

What you said

'I still own my first camera, a Kodak Brownie 127. I started using it at age eight'

'British artist John Dyer took up photography at age ten with a Pentax ME Super. By the age of 11 he had a triple-page spread featuring his art photos in AP. By the age of 17, he was published by Athena. At 19, he won the Thames TV award...'

'I bought a disc-film camera from Dixons. I was six'

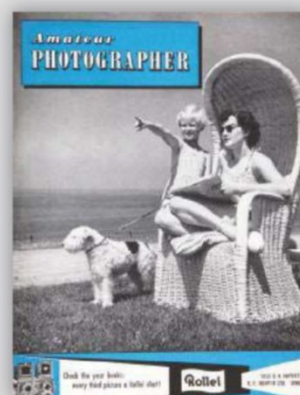
'I was 15 the first time. I finally upgraded four years ago at age 52'

This week we ask

Who do you mainly take portrait pictures of?

Vote online www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Guess the date



Win! Every week we post an old AP cover on our Facebook page and all you have to do is guess the issue date (day/month/year). The person who is closest to the exact date wins a year's digital subscription to AP, worth £79.99. To guess the date of this cover (above), head over to www.facebook.com/Amateur.photographer.magazine. Forum members can also enter via the Forum.



The 8 November issue's cover was from 2 April 1930. The winner is Bryan Metters from Lancashire, who was the first correct entry drawn at random

with teachers about whether my magazine was instructive or pornographic!

If photographers get a bad press these days (think street photography, pictures of kids in public, and so on), it must, in part, be a legacy of the smutty image that AP – perhaps as part of a wider culture, to be fair – helped give photographers. In my local newsagent, AP was top-shelf stuff, complete with polythene sleeve and censoring stickers.

One thing that hasn't changed since those days is AP's reliance on young, slim, white, able-bodied girls when it comes to modelling shots. They invariably look either innocent, rosy-cheeked and a bit startled, or more knowing, complete with parted sex-doll mouths and smouldering eyes. Given that readers of these articles are more interested in the kit being reviewed or new techniques, how about mixing it up a bit, with positive images of disabled people, perhaps taking inspiration from Paul Floyd Blake's winning entry from the Taylor Wessing Prize 2009; or the beautiful obese figures of Abbie Cornish's ongoing work; or of ethnic men and women, taking a cue from the likes of Pieter Hugo? Fashion magazines have tried and failed to feature a greater diversity of models, but

perhaps AP, with nothing to lose in this respect, could lead a second charge?

Dr Dennis Low, West Sussex

I'm a big fan of including portrait samples in our tests, but finding a constant supply of willing subjects can be a challenge. We tend to use a mixture of family, friends and professional models, not all of whom are young girls (for example, Callum McInerney-Riley's excellent portrait in his recent Nikon D750 test, shown right) but I admit we could probably do a bit better in this regard –

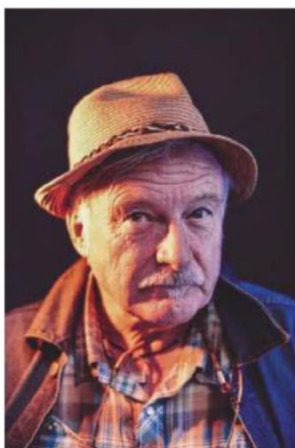
Nigel Atherton, Editor

She sells sanctimony

I was saddened by the letter of the week in AP 1 November, but even more by the sanctimonious comment of Mr Atherton. Yes, there was cheesy stuff around in the '80s but it was of its time. I am becoming annoyed at how we as a society apply our 21st-century mores to times gone by and slag them off.

Nigel Cliff, via email

As someone who joined AP in the early 1990s, when it was struggling to rid itself of its 'Amateur Pornographer' tag, I can assure you that many of the staff were embarrassed by AP's image even then.



Portraits in camera tests – is it time to broaden the scope?

While it was a product of its time to an extent, it was frequently ridiculed in the wider media. As the features editor responsible for producing AP's annual Erotica issue during the late 1990s, I'm no prude, but we did move our coverage of the female (and male) form away from the tacky, tabloid-style glamour photography of the '80s towards more artistic, fine-art figure photography, mostly in black & white. Nowadays it seems that the mood has turned against nudes and erotica of any kind, which I think is a shame, because there's some beautiful work being done in this area –

Nigel Atherton, Editor

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The opaque state

What lies within the world's most secretive country? Photojournalist **Julia Leeb** hopes to shed some light on the people of North Korea. She talks to **Oliver Atwell**

A performance at the Mangyongdae Children's Palace in Pyongyang

Through western eyes, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) can seem like an almost alien land, one defined by stories of dictatorship, moribund economy, labour camps and irrationality. Yet according to Andrei Lankov, author of *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia*, our perception of North Korea is one warped by overheated rhetoric. Lankov suggests that North Korea is anything but irrational. This is, after all, the last standing Stalinist regime and it is one that has survived against all the odds.

What may appear to us in the West to be a country overseen by a mad and unpredictable regime is, in fact, a land that remains in absolute possession of its faculties. A political fossil it may be, but through a careful application of shrewd Machiavellian politics, North Korea has remained a land that is still able to extract support from other countries. It is unlikely to remain that way for long, but for now, despite appearances, North Korea seems to know exactly what it is doing.

The aforementioned preconceptions of the DPRK are exactly what drove photojournalist

Julia Leeb and two friends to explore this hermit kingdom. Travelling under a tourist visa – photojournalists are rarely allowed to enter North Korea – Julia and her companions toured the country, cameras in hand and strict guides in tow, to see what they could learn about the 24 million individuals who live under the watchful eye of Kim Jong-un's regime. That's the key to Julia's new book *North Korea:*

Anonymous Country – the people.

'North Koreans are often referred to as "mindless robots",' says Julia. '[During my time in North Korea] I was looking for the human factor; the individuals; the special moment. And indeed, North Koreans are people who are very much alive. Since North Korea is a society we barely know, that's hard to imagine.

'Due to the isolation of the country, you have very limited access to officially published news by North Korea itself. The information published by the Korean Central News Agency, for example, seems extremely outlandish to us. I didn't read travel reports because I wanted to have an unbiased view and form my own experiences.'

On tour

The images that make up *North Korea: Anonymous Country* (which is divided into the three



'Once I touched down on North Korean soil, I had no access to newspapers, television or the internet'



© GREGOR NIJALAI

Julia Leeb

Julia Leeb is a photojournalist from Germany. The emphasis of her work is on areas in political upheaval. For example, she has undertaken long-term projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, the Gaza Strip and Iran. Her pictures from war-torn countries have been published in numerous publications, including *The Huffington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *La Stampa*.

sections of architecture, culture and people) were taken during two trips. The first was in 2012 (specifically to visit the Arirang Festival) and the second in 2013. While the two journeys were conducted under the close scrutiny of appointed guides, the second trip is notable for the air of uncertainty that hung in the air. Such was the paranoia permeating the country that Julia and her companions had their passports taken from them for the duration of the journey.

'When I arrived in North Korea in 2013, the overall situation was very tense,' she explains. 'The armistice agreement between North and South Korea had been dissolved, so officially the two Koreas were in a state of war. Once I touched down on North Korean soil, I couldn't make any phone calls and I had no access to newspapers, television or the internet. Since several countries had issued travel warnings, there were barely any other foreigners who could give me information about the outside world. North Korea even recommended the evacuation of foreign embassies. The special economic zone was closed and people were becoming nervous. Due to the total isolation, I really didn't know if there would be war or not.'

'The first time I visited North



The Arirang Festival

'The culture section of *North Korea Anonymous Country* covers the DPRK's annual extravaganza – the Arirang Festival,' says Julia. 'This year's festival has been cancelled due to unknown reasons [official word is that it is because 2014 is not a year with any major anniversary]. It's the most elusive event I've ever seen in my life. More than 100,000 people participate and I don't know how they organise it. Most people don't use cars or buses – they just walk. [When you're watching it] you don't know if you are dreaming or awake. It's

difficult to describe. You zoom in on hundreds of thousands of people, each carrying a card. The precise mass choreography depicts symbols of the state's Juche ideology, which stands for political sovereignty, economic self-sufficiency and military independence. The synchronised dancing, the human mosaics and the meticulously coordinated waves formed by thousands of participants have even made it into the *Guinness World Records* book. In my eyes, Arirang serves as motivation and enhances a common identity.'

A torch that lights up at night crowns the Juche tower in Pyongyang. Often it is one of only a few light sources in North Korea's capital





Korea, words like “war” and “self-defence” had no part in common conversations. The second time, “war” was not abstract any more. It became something concrete.’

Each of Julia’s trips lasted about a week. During this time she went mountain hiking, visited caves, saw the border twice and visited a solitary army major in the hills who showed her the boundary wall – a structure whose existence has apparently been denied by South Korea.

‘I saw agricultural cooperatives, had a night picnic eating local mussels, and inspected factories, hospitals, kindergartens and schools,’ says Julia. ‘I travelled thousands of kilometres through the country and never stayed in a place for more than one night. North Korea is definitely a country with a lot to explore even if you’re on a tight schedule.’

Restrictions and rules

During these two trips to North Korea, Julia’s central aim was to get

‘My goal was to leave the political overkill pictures aside and concentrate more on the people’

to the heart of what it is like to exist within the strange cult of personality of Kim Jong-un. The 24 million citizens and various visiting foreigners find themselves subject to a series of restrictions and rules, many of which affected Julia’s ability to photograph freely.

‘Like in many other countries, you’re not allowed to take pictures of soldiers or military institutions,’ says Julia. ‘North Korea also has some very specific rules regarding photographs of the “dear leader” statues. The cult of personality is a substitution for religion. You are therefore only allowed to photograph the entire figure and never take pictures from behind. Doing so would be considered a lack of respect.’

However, Julia did find herself

able to capture the daily lives of the North Korean people. One touching scene shows a photographer taking wedding pictures on a couple’s special day. Other images consist of the kinds of scenes one could expect to find in their own city: citizens making their way through the city on foot or commuting on the train. It is this seeming mundanity that makes the scenes so compelling. Their lives look not unlike our own.

‘As we all know, the country is currently politically and ideologically isolated and faces hard sanctions,’ says Julia. ‘In this book, I wanted to show different aspects of this exceptional country. My goal was to leave the political overkill pictures aside and concentrate more on the people and their way of life. The viewer has the opportunity to form his or her own opinions.’

With this in mind, a question arises: how do the people of North Korea believe the rest of the world views them?

‘I was asked this question by my guide,’ says Julia. ‘My response, trying to be as polite as possible, was that North Korea does not have the best reputation in the outside world. I told him that Westerners see his country as an aggressor and he was shocked. Since North Koreans are cut off from the outside world, their perspective is different to that of people in other countries.’

‘According to North Koreans, the outside world acts aggressively towards them, making them feel constantly threatened. After some conversations, it became pretty clear that North Korea sees itself as the political playground of three world powers. This argument also serves to justify the nuclear weapons and their existence.’

Above: A ruler cult with religious overtones. You can take pictures of the statues, but only the entire figure and only from the front

Right: Following the rampant destruction during the Korean War, the cities were rebuilt and the buildings became a symbol of solidarity





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➤ They see it as a necessary means of survival – North Korea has a rather defensive nationalism.’

In Pyongyang

According to Julia, North Korean architecture has a unique status. Nearly all the cities in North Korea were totally destroyed during the Korean War (25 June 1950-27 July 1953). Reconstruction entered the history books as the pinnacle of solidarity between socialist nations.

‘Since the planning authority left nothing to chance, the model city of Pyongyang took shape on the drawing board,’ Julia explains. ‘All-pervasive symmetry, deliberate lines of sight and colossal design vocabulary are intended to affect people’s perceptions and thereby build a new society.

‘Symbols such as torches, magnolia blossoms, hammers, sickles and paintbrushes are everywhere representing the state ideology and acting as propaganda. North Koreans are accustomed to the overarching importance of public space and monumentality of architecture, like in the days of the Pharaohs.’

Living within the shadow of such overwhelmingly ideologically led

architecture, the people of North Korea are able to live in a hermetically sealed box. North Korea is a country that perpetuates strict discipline – something the people of the DPRK must face from a very early age.

‘Children in North Korea grow up in a collective and are conditioned very early,’ says Julia. ‘In a kindergarten, for example, I witnessed a baby orchestra by three-year-olds.

‘The Mangyongdae Children’s Palace (a public facility where pioneer members – children – can engage in extra-curricular activities, such as learning music, foreign languages, computing skills and sports) is another symbol for extreme infantile professionalism. North Korean children act remarkably mature.’

In the end, Julia’s trip to North Korea passed without incident. The group’s passports were returned and Julia went home to build an image of North Korea through the vast array of images that she had stockpiled on her journey throughout the hermit kingdom. As we now know, the cataclysm of all-out war was avoided and once again North Korea worked its magic to keep the global political

In front of the Minsok Folk Hotel in Kaesong

volves from its tightly shut doors.

Perhaps the greatest virtue of *North Korea: Anonymous Country* is in its portrait of the North Korean people. Rather than being the kinds of mindless puppets as we have been led to believe by the skewed perspective of the global press, the people of North Korea are, in the words of 13-year-old North Korean defector Park Yeon-mi, ‘normal people like you and I’.

Yet despite this, North Korea still remains a fascinating mystery, particularly to Western audiences. It is, after all, as Julia says, the world’s most secretive country.

‘We know so very little about the people living there,’ she concludes. ‘Even for the international secret services, North Korea remains a dark spot. The people of North Korea live nearly untouched by globalisation, in their own calendar, in a time capsule. A journey to North Korea is like travelling to a parallel universe.’

AP



North Korea: Anonymous Country by Julia Leeb is published by teNeues and costs £65 (ISBN 978-3-83279-843-7). The book also contains interactive features with exclusive music composed by Xenia Maculan. Visit www.teneues.com for details

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Sjoerd Stellingwerf

Sjoerd Stellingwerf is a freelance digital creative based in Deventer, the Netherlands. With eight years of experience in advertising as a designer and art director, he specialises in concept development and the creation of all kinds of images. What all his creations have in common is a well-thought-out idea and a sense of humour. Visit his website at www.sjoerdstellingwerf.nl



Chewing Gum Bubble

By Sjoerd Stellingwerf

From a simple sketch comes a surreal idea. **Sjoerd Stellingwerf** reveals the process behind this image

There are a lot of discussions about the merits of Photoshop. Some people hate it and some love it, but I agree with the latter view. While it can produce some horrible results in the wrong hands, it's an incredibly powerful tool for creating images that you can't make with your camera alone. I like to think of my manipulations as surrealistic with a touch of humour. I only make use of my own images, not those from stock libraries.

Concept

Before I even pick up a camera and start taking pictures, I like to make a sketch of the idea I want to create. In this case, I envisaged a shot of a girl blowing bubble gum that becomes so big that she starts to float off the ground.

To achieve this look, I needed to shoot a series of three images that I could then merge together – the background, the bubble gum and the girl. I decided to photograph the background first, because this would determine the lighting on both

the bubble gum and the model.

I shot my background during the golden hour, when the sun was really low and there were lots of shadows being cast. I took multiple images of the same scene that I then merged later in Photoshop. When shooting for composites, it's very important to keep certain things in mind when shooting pictures for a background. For example, where is the main light source? What is the position/angle of the camera? What are the settings of the camera? I like to make a note of these points so that when I'm back in the studio shooting the model, I can set and position my camera accordingly.

I wanted a blonde model because it seemed to fit the mood I was aiming for. I also bought some bubble gum to blow some nice bubbles, which is more difficult than it seems. All these things should be shot with the same light, from the same angle and with the same settings.

Now for the most interesting part: merging the pictures together to create a single image.

KEY IMAGES



The main subject is shot in the studio



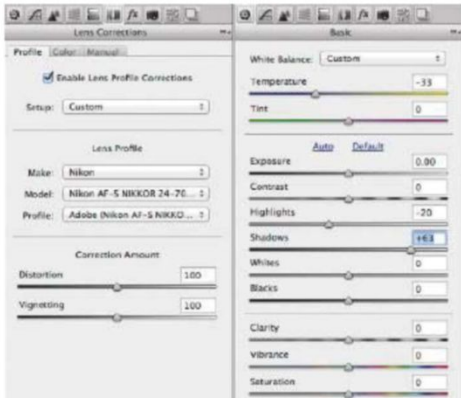
Multiple shots of the background are taken



Two images of the bubblegum are used

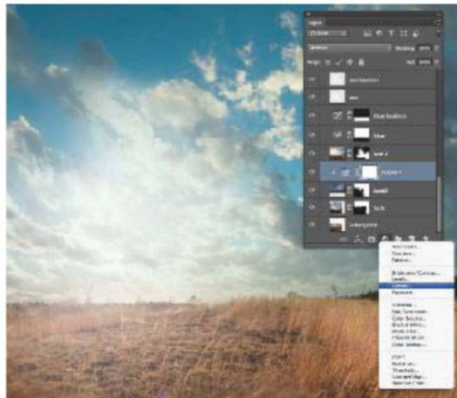
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STEP BY STEP



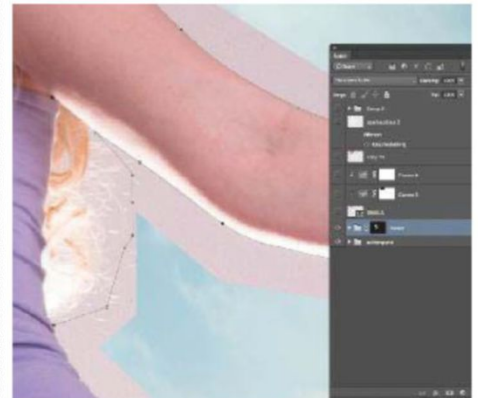
1 Camera Raw

My background is made up of four pictures that I took at the same time. I always shoot in raw, so in Adobe Camera Raw I made some basic lens corrections to each file before adjusting the Highlights and Shadows until I was satisfied with the result.



2 Create the background

In Photoshop, I combined several images to form the background. With the help of layer masks, I erased the parts I didn't need. Then, in order to blend the different layers, I made some colour corrections first with the Curves panel.



3 Isolate the model

With a new layer mask, I isolated the model. There are many different ways to do this in Photoshop, but for the 'hard' lines I prefer to use the Pen tool. Isolating hair is more difficult, though, and I usually try to avoid it, or I use Edge Detection and Refine Edge.



4 Bring in the chewing gum

When the model was in the right position, it was time for the chewing gum. Again, I used the Pen tool for my layer mask. It works really intuitively when used with my Wacom Pro Tablet and feels just like drawing.



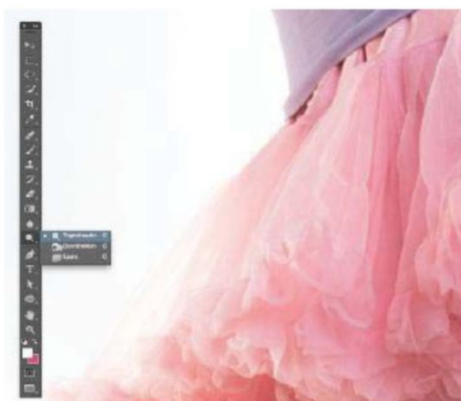
5 Liquify

As the bubble gum wasn't looking the way I wanted it to, I needed to fine-tune some adjustments using the Warp tool because this allows me a good level of control. The Liquify tool is also a great way to reshape objects.



6 Add shadows

When you place a model in a background, you should add a shadow to make it look realistic. I normally use the shadow I created in the studio and set that layer to multiply. In this case, the sun is very low so there is no shadow.



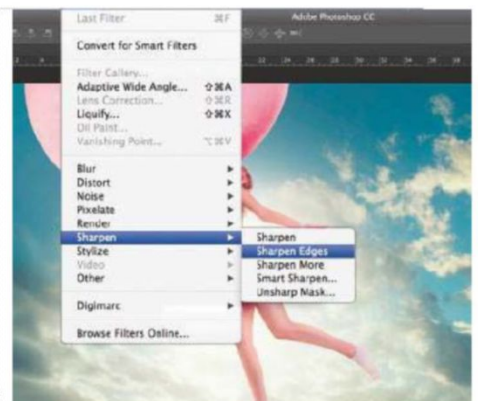
7 Dodge and burn

After I had finished my composition, I created two new layers: one for dodging and one for burning. These are adjustment layers, with a mask, because I try to work non-destructively. With a soft brush, I adjusted the areas that I wanted to lighten or darken.



8 Colour corrections

I then added a colour layer in a warm tone to blend all the layers. This time I chose orange to make the image a bit warmer. I set the transparency to 3% and the blending mode to Color. It has a minimal effect, but it works for me.



9 Sharpening

To sharpen the image, I made a copy of all the layers together and used the High Pass filter. I changed the blend mode to Soft Light and lowered the Opacity until it looked right. The image is now finished!

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Photographs by Tony Hurst



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NIKON F2 DATA CAMERA SET

In this issue we feature one of the rarest Nikon cameras ever made, the F2 DATA camera. There were two versions made for advanced scientific/industrial applications – the F2 Nikon MF-10 36-exposure and the MF-11 250-exposure Data Backs.

The F2 DATA cameras were only available in a black finish with "F2 DATA" engraved beside the serial number. They were sold with either the F2 eye-level (DE-1) the F2A (DP-11) or F2AS (DP-12) Photomic finders. Built into the Data Backs was a high-intensity, short duration electronic flash capable of synchronisation at any shutter speed which allowed you expose your chosen data onto the film. The film is illuminated from the rear via a precision 10mm f/1.8 lens (comprising of 4 elements in four groups). Both MF-10 and MF-11 databacks offer three separate devices for entering data – a clock, a dating unit and memo plates. The memo plates could be used for entering hand-written information such as lens settings, shooting location, type of film, etc.

The design of the MF-10 and MF-11 data backs enables one to superimpose exposure-related information onto the left edge of the frame, including date, time, etc. The F2 Data camera bodies are virtually standard except for two unique elements to ensure the most precise data-recording operation. The F2 Data cameras were supplied with the MD-2/MB-1 Motor Drive unit sets. This example is in like-new condition complete with all original maker's boxes.

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APOY 2014 Amateur Photographer OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

MONOCHROME

We present the stunning top 30 images from APOY round 8,
The World in Black & White

Pawel Pentlinowski from Co Wicklow in Ireland is the winner of round 8, The World in Black & White, of APOY 2014. Pawel will receive an Olympus OM-D E-M10 with a 14-42mm EZ Pancake zoom, a 45mm f/1.8 portrait lens, a 40-150mm zoom, a 9mm fisheye lens, a macro adaptor and a street case in which to carry it all. That's a total retail price of £1,200.

The E-M10 has a 16.1-million-pixel, four thirds-sized CMOS sensor and a TruePic VII image-processing system. The 1.44-million-dot EVF displays a 100% field of view and has a 120fps refresh rate. The 14-42mm EZ Pancake zoom lens is a slim and compact optic that is equivalent to a 28-84mm lens in the 35mm format.

The 45mm f/1.8 portrait optic is ideal for low-light people shots without flash, while the 40-150mm zoom has high-speed AF and is optimised for movies and stills. The 9mm fisheye lens is ideal for capturing wideangle scenes.

Our second-placed winner is Jevgenijs Scolokovs from Riga in Latvia. He will receive an Olympus Pen E-PL5 camera plus a 14-42mm and 40-150mm twin-lens zoom kit worth £500.

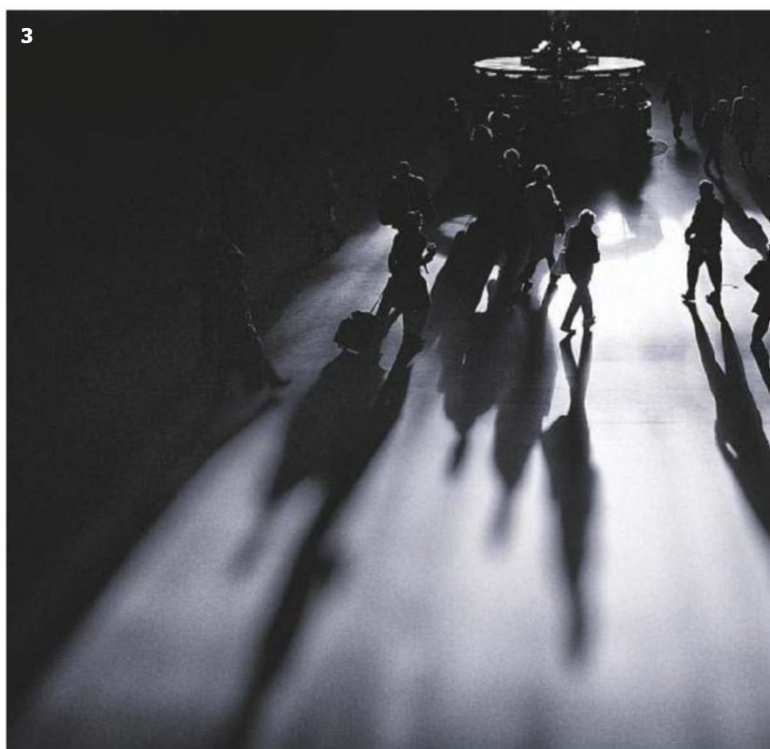
The E-PL5 offers serious image quality with its powerful 16.1-million-pixel sensor and a new OM-D component in the TruePic VI image processor. The camera has lightning-fast autofocus, a touch-sensitive LCD screen and full HD video.

Steve Baker from Tunbridge Wells in Kent takes third place in this round. He wins an Olympus Stylus SP-100EE Ultra Zoom camera, with an impressive 16-million-pixel sensor and 3in LCD screen. The camera includes a handy autofocus lock so you need never lose a shot due to fuzzy focusing. Other features include a 50x optical Ultra Zoom lens with a focal length ranging from 24mm to 1,200mm, and built-in Dot Sight to make it easier to focus on subjects.

The 2014 leaderboard

APOY regular Dan Deakin has overtaken last month's leader, Mark Helliwell, and is now nine points ahead. Aaron Bennett is joined by Jevgenijs Scolokovs in third place, with Chris Wood is fifth, and Angela Nelson and Bertrand Chombart in joint sixth.

1 Dan Deakin	193pts	6 Angela Nelson	135pts
2 Mark Helliwell	184pts	6 Bertrand Chombart	135pts
3 Aaron Bennett	151pts	8 Gerard Sexton	117pts
3 Jevgenijs Scolokovs	151pts	9 Farid Sani	108pts
5 Chris Wood	149pts	10 Sigita Playdon	107pts



3 Steve Baker Kent 48pts

Nikon D90, 18-200mm, 1/60sec at f/3.5, ISO 200

Steve's image, taken in New York's Grand Central Station at dawn, was certainly an image that stood out during the initial selection process. The location is interesting enough, but Steve has added further engagement by processing his shot using Photoshop, Silver Efex Pro and, most importantly, Alien Skin Software Exposure to give the image a Lensbaby style effect. All that work has paid off to achieve a wonderful image.



2 Jevgenijs Scolokovs Latvia 49pts

Canon EOS 5D, 135mm, 1/2656sec at f/2, ISO 100

Like Pawel's image, this shot relies on the viewer's imagination. Why is this woman knitting in the open air and where exactly did that umbrella come from? This is a wonderfully arranged shot and one that benefits strongly from its lack of colour.



1 Pawel Pentlinowski Ireland 50pts

Nikon D300, 50mm, 1/160sec at f/1.8, ISO 200

While we knew that the monochrome round of APOY would be popular, we could not have predicted just how strong the images would be. It actually took the judges a couple of days to select a top three and after much deliberation we finally decided that Pawel's magical image, 'Princess Marie', would take the top spot. It's a beautifully composed and lit fairytale image that can't help but capture the viewer's imagination.



4 Iolanda Enrione Italy 47pts

Nikon D600, 24-70mm, 1/3sec at f/11, ISO 100

This autumn scene evokes the magic of fairy tales. The thin veil of mist gives the light a diffused quality that benefits the overall scene

5 Foad Ashtari Iran 46pts

Canon EOS 7D, 18-200mm, 1/320sec at f/9, ISO 200

This is a wonderful architecture shot that uses a single figure to communicate scale

6 Dariusz Jasiulek Poland 45pts

Canon EOS 600D, 17-70mm, 1/3200sec at f/5.6, ISO 800

We don't often see shots of birds quite like this. It's a beautiful graphic image that makes excellent use of backlighting

7 Chris Wood Gloucestershire 44pts

Canon EOS 7D, 100mm, 1/60sec at f/8, ISO 800

The title of this image is 'Same Planet, Different World'. By getting in close and removing the colours, Chris has created a miniature landscape occupied by one eight-legged creature

8 Darren Moore Surrey 43pts

Nikon D700, 10-20mm, 50secs at f/10, ISO 100

Darren achieved his shot through a combination of a B+W ND106 6-stop ND filter and a 0.9 soft-edge graduated filter

9 Eric Browett Hertfordshire 42pts

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-W70, 1/500sec at f/13

The use of negative space running throughout the scene is a necessary way to lead the viewer back and forth between the boat and bridge

10 Zay Yar Lin Burma (Myanmar) 41pts

Nikon D600, 28-300mm, 1/400sec at f/16, ISO 200

This scene of hot-air balloons at Bagan, Burma, was taken at sunrise. As a result, we have beautiful shafts of light streaming through the mist as well as a lovely application of backlight

11 David Queenan West Lothian 40pts

Nikon D610, 18-35mm, 4secs at f/11, ISO 100

A ghostly image that utilises the fog to reveal the strong graphic structure

12 Marco Iozzi France 39pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 24-105mm, 1/160sec at f/22, ISO 500

This image has used the reflections in the water to create a landscape that has real depth

13 Russ Barnes Coventry 38pts

Nikon D800, 45mm tilt-and-shift, 1/800sec at f/4, ISO 100

Russ's use of a tilt-and-shift lens has meant that the focus lands on the central subject and extends to the horizon beyond

14 Aaron Yeoman North Yorkshire 37pts

Sony Alpha 99, 17-35mm, 1/40sec at f/13, ISO 400

Architecture can give us wonderful abstract images. The geometric forms of the structure are intricate and visually engaging

15 Colin Balch Caerphilly 36pts

Nikon D90, 60mm, 1sec at f/22, ISO 100

This macro shot was illuminated with the diffused light from a window

16 Mark Cornick Greater London 35pts

Canon EOS 550D, 10-20mm, 1/25sec at f/5, ISO 400

The title of this image is 'Permineralization', referring to the almost fossil-like appearance of the spiral staircase

17 Pete Bedell Ireland 34pts

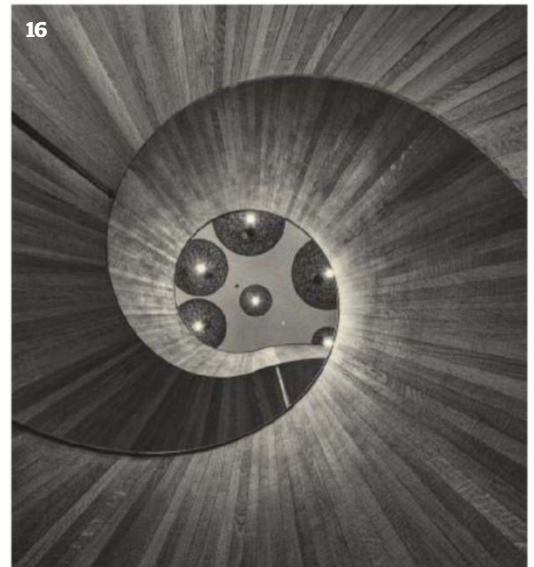
Canon EOS-1DS Mark II, 24-105mm, 35secs at f/8, ISO 100, Lee Filters Big Stopper and ND grad

This beach scene, taken in Biarritz, France, speaks of isolation and minimalism





'By getting in close and removing the colours, Chris has created a miniature landscape occupied by one eight-legged creature'



18 Damien Mcglade Lancashire 33pts

Nikon D7100, 11-16mm, 1/30sec at f/8, ISO 160

The perspective is the key to this shot of No 1 Deansgate in Manchester

19 Darren Foxall West Midlands 32pts

Nikon D300s, 10-24mm, 30secs at f/16 and 1/13sec at f/4, ISO 200 and 1600, tripod

This was lit with a combination of natural light (coming from the hole above the guitarist's head) and a torch

20 Richard Pennington Essex 31pts

Canon EOS 550D, 18-55mm, 4secs at f/8, ISO 100

This atmospheric image was taken on the Noord-Zuidlijn line in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. It's a perfectly composed image that makes great use of its wonderful location

21 Abhishek Nandy India 30pts

Canon EOS 60D, 24-105mm, 1/80sec at f/4.5, ISO 1000

A nicely observed and composed image taken in Vrindavan, India. The clean white clothing of the subject really stands out in the environment

22 Allan Castañeda Philippines 29pts

Canon EOS 60D, 10-20mm, 1/100sec at f/9, ISO 100

The beautiful light has given the scene a nice balance between the details in the sky and water, and the silhouetted figure in the boat

23 Adrian Sadlier Ireland 28pts

Nikon D7000, 70-200mm, 1/1000sec at f/6.3, ISO 100

The lone figure in the bottom right is the perfect addition to this bleak November scene of an abandoned power station

24 Andy Teasdale Gwynedd 27pts

Nikon D800, 24-120mm, 1/500sec at f/18, ISO 200

Light and form combine to create an evocative and engaging image of the natural landscape

25 Richard Krchnak Slovakia 26pts

Canon EOS 550D, 18-200mm, 1/250sec at f/11, ISO 200

This is a beautiful graphic image and a great demonstration of what can be achieved when the distraction of colour is removed and the viewer is forced to focus on shape and form

26 Anirban Ghosh India 25pts

Nikon D90, 18-200mm, 1/800sec at f/6.3, ISO 200

While the figures are a nice subject, it's the light hitting the grass that makes this such an engaging image

27 Dan Deakin Nottingham 24pts

Panasonic Lumix DMC-GX7, 14mm, 1/80sec at f/2.8, ISO 400

Another image that makes great use of its location – a tunnel under a railway line. Using the children has also created a strong sense of narrative within the scene

28 John Thompson Essex 23pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 16-35mm, 1/40sec at f/8, ISO 50

Spiral staircases are popular subjects and here we see John has positioned himself in such a way as to create a fantastic leading line throughout the image

29 Samuel Butler York 22pts

Nikon D7100, 105mm, 1/2000sec at f/4.8, ISO 250

This is certainly not an image for the squeamish. That said, it is a truly beautiful shot

30 Andrew Harris Gwent 21pts

Canon EOS 40D, 10-20mm, 2secs at f/22, ISO 200

This image is of Sgwd Einion Gam waterfall in Ystradfellte, Brecon Beacons. It's not an easy place to access, but thankfully Andrew managed it and achieved this excellent landscape image





20



23



26



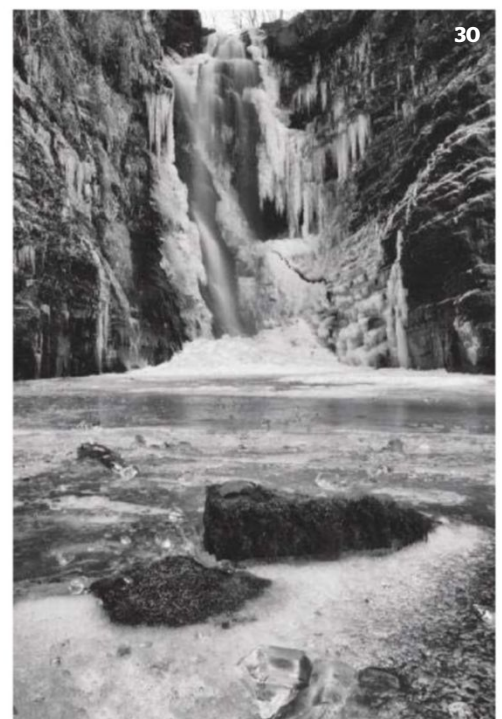
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Appraisal

Expert advice and tips on improving your photography from **Damien Demolder**

AFTER

Picture
of the
week



By applying minor adjustments, Hayri's shot is lifted to another level

Ladybird Hayri Kodal

Canon EOS 550D, 57mm with extension tube, 1/60sec, ISO 800

WE PROBABLY all have, somewhere on our hard drives, pictures of a ladybird walking across someone's hand – usually a child's. However, this image is, I think, an exceptional example. It is still 'ladybird walks over thumb' as so many of these shots are, but it is the combination of soft lighting, the catchlight on the wings, the mercifully moderate colour saturation and, above all, the sweeping curve of the finger in the background that make this shot stand out from the rest of the world's. I've simplified the image to monochrome so we can all see just how that curve works, how the dome of the ladybird is echoed in the dome of the end of the thumb,

BEFORE

Hayri's original ladybird shot



and how the catchlights on the wings and the thumbnail work so well together. It is a beautiful composition of a very ordinary scene, proving that the factual content of our images are not the most important elements in their success.

I've made a small trim to help those curves

A mono version reveals the forms within the composition



land directly in the corners of the frame, and I've opened the exposure by a fraction of a stop to lift the middle tones of the insect and the skin on the thumb, both to emphasise their roundness.

This is a joy to look at, Hayri. You win my picture of the week award.



Win! Send up to six prints, slides or images on CD (include the original files from the camera along with your versions on the CD). Tell us about the pictures and include details of equipment used and exposure settings. Send your images to *Appraisal* at the address on page 3. Enclose an SAE if you want them returned. The picture of the week will receive a year's digital subscription to AP worth £79.99.

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AFTER



Reducing the brightness has helped to recover some detail

BEFORE



dirty grey. With the exposure compensation I should think that grey was very dirty, and that she has had to do some work to lift the image. And work she has, increasing the contrast and brightening the tones to the point where the highlights have burned out and the noise from an image shot at ISO 200 is very noticeable.

This is one of those occasions where we really do need to get things right in-camera. Snowy days like this are usually quite low in contrast, and to capture that accurately we need to get exposure dead-on. I would usually expect to dial in +1.3EV on a bright day, and on a day like this about +0.7EV – just enough to lift the snow to a bright tone, but not as bright as white. Heavily clouded days don't tend to have whites.

Despite all that, I rather like Svetlana's image. It depicts a scene we all recognise, and we can imagine the feel and the sounds of the scene.

Cyclist in the snow Svetlana Volkova

Canon EOS 5D, 70-200mm, 1/800sec at f/2.8, ISO 200

I HAVE included Svetlana's snow scene so we can begin thinking about how we will deal with the snow of our own. It can't be too far away!

Svetlana used -0.3EV exposure compensation

here, which seems quite the opposite of what we might usually do. Camera metering systems would usually look at a snow scene, see lots of brightness, and close down, making the snow a

BEFORE



I LOVE a bit of backlighting. It is almost guaranteed to create atmosphere, whatever you are shooting. When shadows deprive us of detail we go looking for something else, knowing that it isn't the facts of the scene the photographer is showing us. And usually all that is left is the atmosphere.

This lovely shot owes its atmosphere to more than backlighting, of course, but the way the light is catching the girls' hair is really the subject of the shot. I love the story in the image (one that we can each invent for ourselves using the clues before us) and the way we can see the close friendships that exist between the girls pictured.

However, most digital cameras, in my opinion, produce JPEGs that aim for instant impact at the expense of balanced tonality. It is often useful to turn down the contrast settings, or to use portrait mode, if you want smoother midtones. Here the hard contrast has created too much difference in the tones of the girls' hair and the background trees. Their clothes, and the

AFTER



A slight crop and a lower contrast result in a more impactful shot

Final night at school Gene Landsberg

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 24-70mm, 1/250sec at f/2.8, ISO 12,800

girl's feet, are also rather too dark.

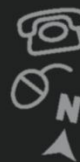
While I don't mind the flare from the light on the left of frame, I do find the structure at the top right very distracting. Gene could have repositioned himself to avoid it. The girls don't look as though they are about to go anywhere, so the shot could have been taken again from

another angle and with a different lens that would help to keep that framework out of view.

I've created a slightly cropped version that shows the differences I think low-contrast camera settings and a different angle may have made. Well seen, though, Gene – you've made a wonderful photograph. I'm just being picky.

Damien Demolder is a photographer, journalist and photographic equipment expert, speaker, judge and educator. He has worked in the photographic publishing industry for 17 years, including 15 years at *Amateur Photographer*. He uses a wide range of equipment, from wooden plate cameras to the latest DSLRs, and is a great fan of all products that make good photography more accessible to more people

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Sirui's K-10X ball head promises professional features at a relatively affordable price. **Andy Westlake** tries it out

At a glance

- 20kg max load
- Friction-adjustment control
- Arca Swiss-compatible quick release

SIRUI is a Chinese photographic equipment maker seeking to establish a reputation for quality products, rather than just low price, and which makes photographic and video tripods and heads.

The K-10X is the smallest in Sirui's premium 'K' range of ball heads. Like its stablemates, the K-10X has separate locking knobs for the main ball and the independent panning base, with an embedded friction-setting control on the main locking knob. A single slot in the ball casing allows the camera to be rotated into portrait orientation. The quick-release platform has three bubble levels, and a safety interlock post to stop your camera inadvertently sliding off the head. All controls are captive, so there's no risk of losing them on your travels and rendering your head useless.

With a 33mm ball diameter, 96mm height and weight of 390g, the K-10X is a natural companion for relatively portable tripods like the Manfrotto 190 series, or Sirui's own T-2204X. Sirui offers a six-year warranty.

Verdict

The K-10X is beautifully engineered and impeccably finished. Having first set the friction control to my liking based on the instructions, I found it performs extremely well, with smooth movement when unlocked and minimal drift when locked down. It can easily support a full-frame DSLR with 70-200mm f/2.8 zoom. Mine is now permanently on my Gitzo Mountaineer tripod.

Quick release

The Arca Swiss-compatible plate has a D-ring screw for easy fastening, and red pull-up anti-twist tabs.

Panning base

The independently locking base is marked at 5° intervals for panorama shooting.

Safety interlock

The red button retracts the safety-lock post that prevents the camera plate from sliding off the head.



ALSO CONSIDER

Calumet Pro D Series 7047

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www.calphoto.co.uk

Calumet's own-brand head is similar in size to the Sirui K-10X, but uses separate ball lock, friction and panning controls, and has a Manfrotto RC2 pattern quick release.



Manfrotto 496 RC2

£59

www.manfrotto.co.uk

This medium-sized head lacks the sophistication of the Sirui, with no separate pan lock, but it's cheaper and offers Manfrotto's usual no-nonsense build quality.



3 Legged Thing AirHed 1 Evolution 2

£139

www.3leggedthing.com

The AirHed is similar in size and layout to the Sirui, but has a larger ball for a 35kg load capacity. It has an Arca-Swiss type quick-release clamp, and comes in black or blue.



Out now

Expert reviews of the latest kit to look out for



Lexar Professional Workflow DD256 USB 3.0 Drive

● £119 ● www.lexar.com

NOT content with providing photographers with some of the best memory cards available, Lexar has added high-capacity USB 3.0 drives and a workstation hub to its product line-up. The Lexar Professional Workflow USB 3.0 solid state drive is available in 256GB and 512GB capacities, and can be used as a standalone storage solution or as part of the Lexar Professional HR2 drive hub that is compatible with Thunderbolt 2.

It offers super-fast write speeds of up to a stated 245MB/s, and using a USB 3.0-compatible computer I managed to transfer images from a full 8GB SDHC card to the Workflow DD256 Data Storage Drive in around 30secs. The drive includes an LED capacity meter, indicating available storage in five 20% steps, while a blue LED indicates power and activity.

These drives are beautifully designed and highly compact, and I also like the modular storage system approach that Lexar has taken with these. For anyone in need of a fast, portable and flexible storage and back-up solution, the Professional Workflow Data Storage Drive from Lexar is a great option. **Jon Devo**

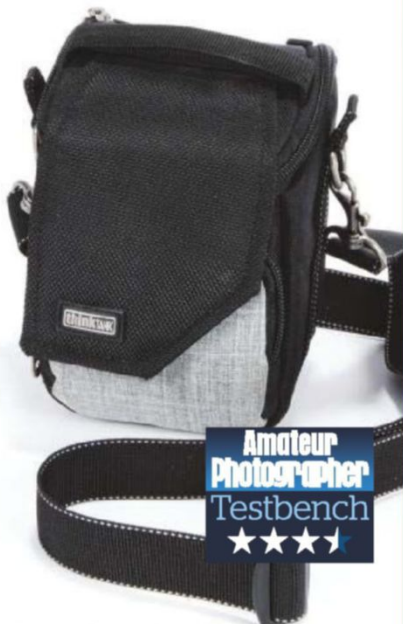
ThinkTank Mirrorless Mover 5

● £26 ● www.thinktankphoto.com

THE THINKTANK Mirrorless Mover 5 is a small carrier for mirrorless cameras such as the Pen series from Olympus or the small Alpha cameras from Sony. Measuring 90 x 120 x 80mm internally, there is only room to fit one very compact system camera along with a pancake style zoom or small prime lens attached. On ThinkTank Photo's website, the Mover 5 is pictured with an OM-D camera next to it, but it would be tight trying to fit even the Olympus E-M10, the smallest of the OM-D series cameras. The bag appears to be well made and its understated black-and-grey design will appeal to people looking for an inconspicuous carrying solution for when they're not wearing their camera around their neck.

This bag can either be worn with the provided strap or attached around the waist via the belt loop. A water-resistant cover is provided in a zip pocket on the front of the bag and the top is secured with a zip and magnetic closure, which is a nice touch.

Jon Devo



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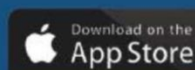


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At a glance

- 16.3-million-pixel, APS-C X-Trans CMOS II sensor
- 35mm (equivalent) f/2 lens
- ISO 200-6400 (raw), 100-51,200 (JPEG)
- Advanced hybrid viewfinder with 2.36-million-dot EVF
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot LCD
- 1/32000sec max shutter speed
- Price £999

Fujifilm X100T

The third generation of this high-end, fixed-lens compact gains an updated viewfinder and refined controls. **Andy Westlake** finds out whether it's a worthwhile upgrade



For and against

- + Choice of optical or electronic viewfinder for composition
- + Analogue control dials give an intuitive and engaging handling experience
- + Impressive image quality
- + Attractive retro styling
- Video footage is relatively poor in quality
- Macro mode could be better implemented
- Rear buttons are a little small and fiddly

Where in the range



Fujifilm X30
Price Around £480
With a fast 28-112mm equivalent f/2-2.8 zoom but smaller 2/3in sensor, the X30 has one of the best electronic viewfinders around

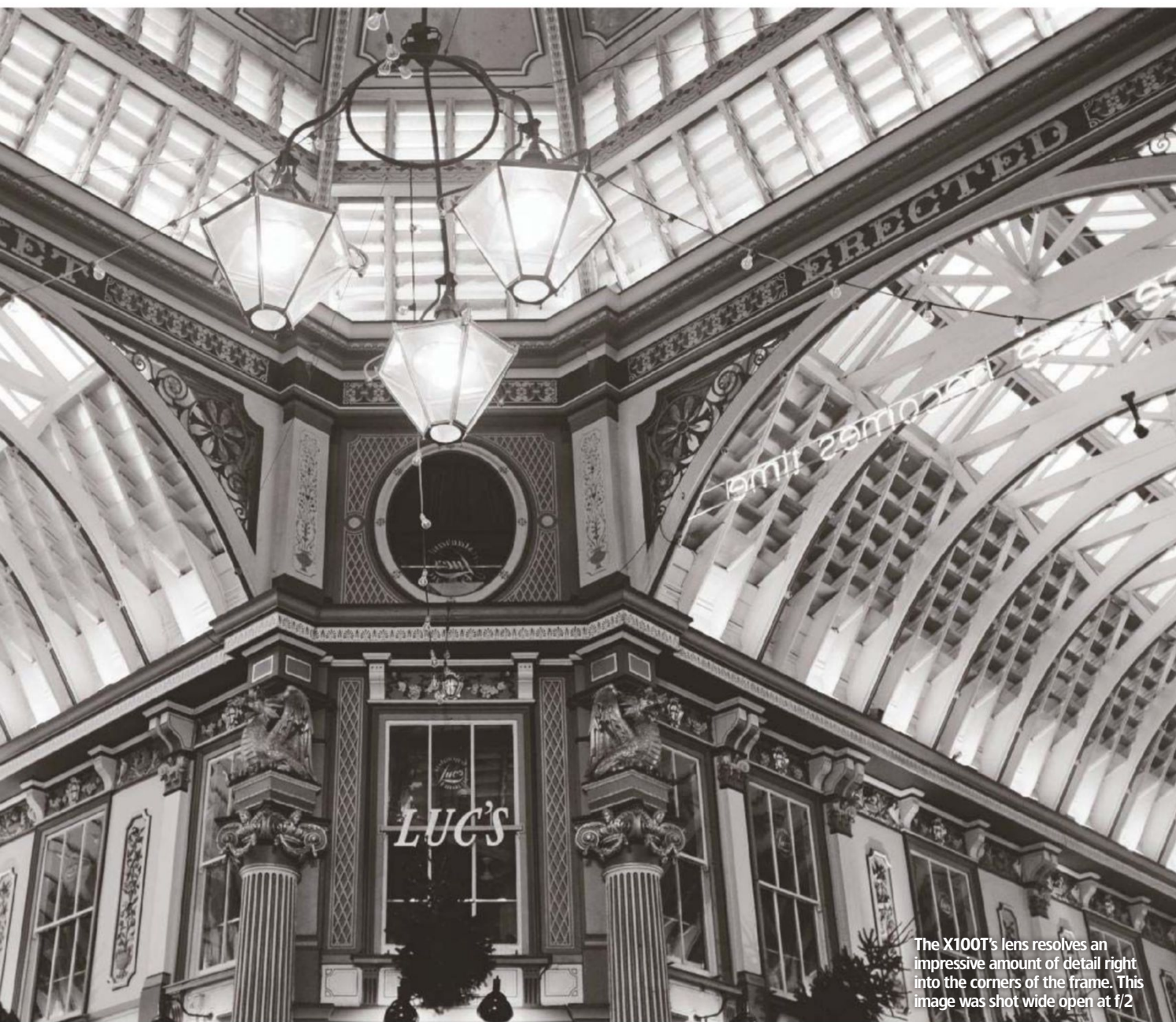
Fujifilm X-Pro1
Price Around £780 body only
Essentially an interchangeable-lens version of the X100, the X-Pro1 has a hybrid viewfinder and analogue controls

Data file

Sensor	16.3-million-pixel, APS-C sensor
Output size	4896 x 3264 pixels
Lens	35mm (equivalent) f/2
Shutter speeds	30-1/32000sec + bulb
ISO	100-51,200 (expanded)
Exposure modes	PASM
Metering system	Multi, spot, average
Exposure comp	±3EV in 1/3 steps
Drive mode	6fps
LCD	3in, 1.04-million-dot LCD
Viewfinder	Hybrid optical/electronic
AF points	49 points
Video	Full HD (1920 x 1080) at 60fps
External mic	Yes, 2.5mm stereo socket
Memory card	SDHC, SDXC
Power	NP-95 rechargeable Li-Ion
Battery life	Approx 330 shots
Dimensions	126.5 x 74.4 x 52.4mm
Weight	440g with battery and card

It is a little over four years since Fujifilm first showed off the X100 premium compact camera, which marked a distinct change in direction (and fortune) for the company. With its unique hybrid optical/electronic viewfinder, traditional control dials and classy good looks, not to mention excellent image quality, the X100 quickly established itself as a favourite among enthusiast photographers.

In its original incarnation, the X100 was distinctly quirky and buggy, but Fujifilm applied its kaizen philosophy of continuous improvement, releasing a series of major firmware updates that transformed its usability. The second version – the X100S – added Fujifilm's unique X-Trans CMOS



The X100T's lens resolves an impressive amount of detail right into the corners of the frame. This image was shot wide open at f/2

sensor, along with much-needed improvements in speed and operational performance.

The X100T (T for 'Third') continues the process, with a range of control refinements to improve the shooting experience, and bring the camera more into line with the company's X-series compact system cameras. Yet perhaps the most interesting update is its advanced hybrid viewfinder, which allows an electronic view of the subject to be projected into the lower-right corner of the optical viewfinder, giving a handy visual focus check during shooting.

Features

While the X100T gains plenty of changes over its predecessor, its imaging core remains the same. It

has a 23mm f/2 lens (equivalent to 35mm on full frame) and a 16.3-million-pixel, APS-C-sized X-Trans CMOS II sensor. This chip eschews a conventional Bayer-pattern colour filter array in favour of Fujifilm's semi-randomised arrangement, which reduces the sensor's susceptibility to giving false colour artefacts. This in turn allows the elimination of the optical low-pass filter that's conventionally used to counter moiré effects. The sensor has phase-detection elements in its central region to assist with autofocus, while an X-Trans processor completes the package.

A sensitivity range of ISO 200-6400 is available for raw shooters, with an expanded range of ISO 100-51,200 for JPEG only. As

the expanded ISOs are those most likely to benefit from careful processing (ISO 100 due to limited highlight range, ISO 12,800-51,200 due to noise), this decision looks rather strange. The X100T repurposes the top-plate Fn button to operate movie recording by default, but I changed it back to ISO, as on previous models.

The X100T includes an excellent auto ISO set-up, which allows you to set maximum and minimum ISO sensitivities, along with a minimum shutter speed you want to use. This means you can often leave the camera set on auto ISO for handheld shooting. Auto ISO is also available in manual-exposure mode and takes into account the exposure-compensation setting, which gives a useful method of shooting.

One handy Fujifilm feature is the dynamic range setting, which allows you to expand the highlight dynamic range before detail clips to white. The DR 200% setting adds an extra stop, and DR 400%, 2 stops. The penalty is that each imposes a higher minimum sensitivity setting – ISO 400 for DR 200%, and ISO 800 for DR 400%, which inevitably reduces image quality a little. Personally, I tend to use DR 200% in high-contrast conditions.

Colour output can be controlled using Fujifilm's film-simulation settings. In addition to the previous Provia, Velvia and Astia options (Astia being my favourite), the X100T gains Classic Chrome, which looks like Kodachrome. Two more-muted Pro Neg settings are optimised for accurate skin



The X100T gives extremely attractive colours straight out of the camera

tones when shooting portraits. Several monochrome options are on offer, too.

Continuous shooting is available up to six frames per second, which is more than adequate given the fixed 35mm-equivalent lens. The X100T has a small built-in flash, along with a hotshoe for more powerful units.

Viewfinder and screen

The unique selling point of the X100 series has always been its optical/electronic hybrid viewfinder. This combines a direct-vision optical viewfinder with an electronic display, and the user can select between the two by flicking a switch on the front of the camera. The EVF can project detailed exposure information into the optical finder, including a live histogram and electronic level.

The X100T improves on previous iterations in several ways. It can now display an electronic view of the subject in the lower right corner of the optical viewfinder, allowing confirmation of focus. In manual-focus mode this can be magnified, and combined with a peaking display or Fujifilm's unique Digital Split Image display. This allows accurate manual focus using the optical finder, bringing the X100T's shooting experience closer to traditional rangefinder cameras.

Viewfinder information displays have been refined to match the X-T1's, and most importantly the focus-distance indicator is much less intrusive than before and no longer interferes with composition. When shooting with the electronic viewfinder, the information display rotates when you turn the camera to portrait format, although this doesn't happen with the optical finder or LCD. The X100T's 3in, 1.04-million-dot LCD is also a huge improvement over the previous generations' 460,000-dot display.

These three viewing options all complement each other nicely. The optical viewfinder gives a real sense of connection with the subject, while the electronic finder allows for more accurate composition. The LCD has similar benefits to the EVF, but lets you shoot with the camera away from your eye, which can be more discreet and less intimidating. Switching between these options is essentially seamless, with no real change in camera behaviour.

Build and handling

In terms of build quality, the X100T really doesn't disappoint. It uses a magnesium-alloy body shell, and the metal control dials are all superbly finished. This camera is a beautiful object that simply begs to be used.

The handling is excellent, too, and a clear advance over previous generations. The aperture ring now has clicks at every $\frac{1}{3}$ -stop step, eliminating the need to set intermediate values using a fiddly rear controller. The exposure-compensation dial offers a wider adjustment of ± 3 stops, and the live histogram in the viewfinder effectively eliminates any guesswork in setting it. If I have a criticism, it's that the small circular buttons on the back of the camera are now a little fiddly to operate, compared to the larger ones on the previous models.

One major improvement is the ability to assign the D-pad on the camera's back to directly move the focus area around the frame. I find this helps to make the most of the optical viewfinder, especially with the visual focus check now available.

The problem here lies with macro mode, which has to be re-assigned to another Fn key if you want to be able to access it easily. The macro function now also works as a toggle, so it's quicker to access, but much easier to turn on

Focal points

The X100T mixes old-fashioned rangefinder-like design with some thoroughly modern technology

Built-in Wi-Fi

You can connect to a smartphone or tablet using the Fujifilm Camera Remote app, for image sharing and remote control. This is easy to set up and works well.

Battery

The NP-95 battery is rated for 330 shots per charge, and can be topped-up either in-camera via USB or with the supplied AC charger.

Raw conversion

Raw images can be converted to JPEGs in-camera, with extensive control over colour mode, contrast, white balance and so on.

Filter adaptor

By detaching the front ring of the lens and attaching an optional adaptor, 49mm filters can be used.

Hotshoe

The X100T accepts external flash units such as Fujifilm's EF-X20 or EF-42, or third-party units like the Nissin i40.



Viewfinder eye sensor

A sensor beside the eyepiece can be used to switch automatically between the LCD and viewfinder.

Connectors

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➤ inadvertently. This slows down autofocus, and disables the optical viewfinder. Oddly, while the Q-menu is now user-customisable, macro mode isn't one of the options.

Performance

According to Fujifilm, the X100T gives the same image quality as the X100S, and I see no reason to disagree. The lens is unchanged, and that's (mostly) a good thing, as it's generally a very capable optic. It gets a little soft at closer focus distances and large apertures, but if you're shooting portraits this is, if anything, flattering. For macro work, though, it's advisable to stop down to f/4 or smaller if you're after any kind of sharpness. The lens is also prone to veiling flare with bright light sources just outside the frame, so it's advisable to use a hood (which also requires an adapter ring). Fujifilm's costs £70, but cheaper clones can be bought online.

The camera's JPEG colour output is, like other Fujifilm models, very attractive. High ISO performance is impressive – you have to look closely to tell ISO 1600 from ISO 200, and the camera produces good-looking images at ISO 3200 and 6400. In particular, it does a good job of maintaining its attractive colour signature, although some detail is inevitably lost to noise. Things do go awry at the extended settings of ISO 12,800 to 51,200, and sadly you can't record raw files at these sensitivities to apply your own processing afterwards.

The X100T is capable of recording full HD video at up to 60fps, with full manual control over exposure and the ability to attach an external microphone. But the quality of footage isn't great, and the lack of any image stabilisation means that handheld footage is disturbingly jittery. If you have a serious interest in video, better options are available.

Autofocus

The X100T's AF system offers 25 focus points when shooting through the optical viewfinder, with an optional parallax-corrected display. When shooting with the EVF or LCD, 49 focus points are available across almost the entire frame, and the size of the focus area can be adjusted in five steps to suit the subject.

Autofocus speed is starting to look slightly dated, and the X100T is noticeably not as fast as the best of its peers. In particular, it's not great for moving subjects. On a more positive note, though, focus accuracy is excellent.



Lab results

Andrew Sydenham's lab tests reveal just how the camera performs

THE X-Trans CMOS sensor does away with an optical low-pass filter, and can resolve an impressive amount of detail without being prone to unpleasant artefacts. This is shown in our tests, with the camera making full use of its 16.3-million-pixel resolution, recording impressive amounts of detail even at high ISOs. Indeed, settings up to ISO 3200 are very usable indeed, although some fine low-contrast detail will be lost.

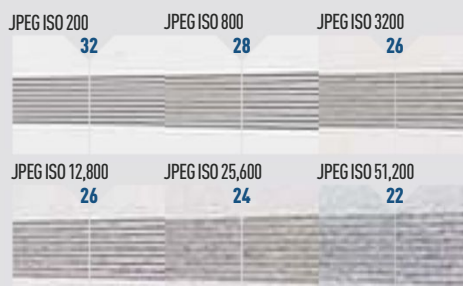
Dynamic range is pretty good at low ISOs, and the sensor continues to perform well as the sensitivity is increased. The camera's dynamic range settings are on hand to make best use of this, by helping the user avoid highlight clipping in high-contrast lighting.

One area where the X100T excels is in its JPEG colour rendition. In the default 'Provia/Standard' mode it delivers attractive, true-to-life colours, and

other settings deliver different, but still generally well-judged palettes. Auto white balance can err towards the cool side, although rarely to an unpleasant degree.

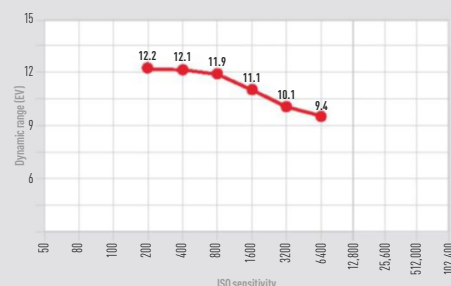
Images from the X-Trans sensor tend to look different at the pixel level from conventional Bayer sensors, and some raw converters handle the files better than others. It is therefore worth experimenting in order to find a program that best suits your needs.

Resolution



The X100T resolved a maximum of around 3200L/ph on our Applied Imaging test chart, which is about as much as its 16.3-million-pixel sensor could theoretically achieve. There's some false detail at higher frequencies, but nothing visually troublesome. Resolution falls as the sensitivity is increased, to 2800L/ph at ISO 800, and 2600L/ph at ISO 3200. At the three highest settings (only in JPEG mode) resolution deteriorates quickly. These tests were shot at the optimum aperture of the lens at f/5.6.

Dynamic range



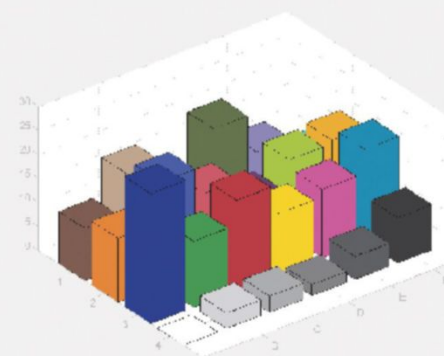
The X100T only records raw files from ISO 200-6400, so these graphs cover a relatively limited sensitivity range. The X-Trans CMOS sensor delivers very creditable results, with a peak dynamic range of 12.2EV at ISO 200 according to our Applied Imaging tests. What's impressive, though, is how well dynamic range is maintained at higher sensitivities, with 10.1EV at ISO 3200 promising usable images. Even ISO 6400 should be fine for less-critical purposes, although shadow noise is likely to be more obvious.

Colour

This 3D graph compares the colour shift from the reference colour to the photographed chart: the higher the peak, the greater the shift from the original. In the default JPEG setting, the X100T shows a relatively neutral colour rendition, but saturation is increased somewhat across the board, giving attractive-looking images.

Fujifilm offers extensive colour controls – additional film-simulation modes include Velvia/Vivid for a much more saturated, punchier look, and Astia/Soft, which gives slightly more muted colours. Additional Pro Neg modes are optimised for portrait shooting.

Colour output can be further fine-tuned to your taste, either in the menu or during in-camera raw development.



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Noise

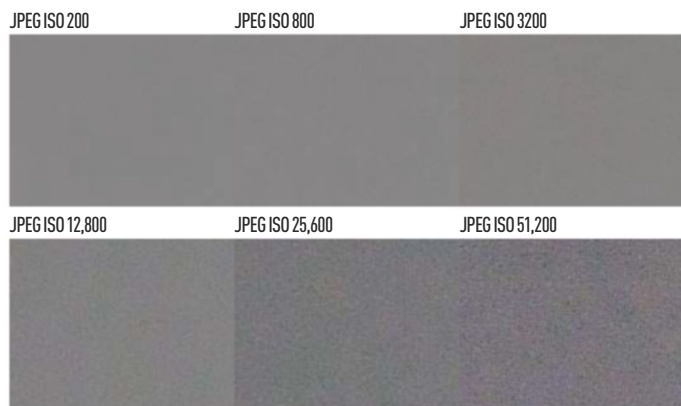
Both raw and JPEG images taken from our diorama scene are captured at the full range of ISO settings. The camera is placed in its default setting for JPEG images. Raw images are sharpened and noise reduction applied, to strike the best balance between resolution and noise.



The images above have a resolution of 300ppi, reflecting a high-resolution print. The X100T gives sharp, detailed images at base ISO, and its image quality holds up very well to ISO 1600 at least. There's an increase in noise if you look closely, but both colour saturation and fine detail are maintained well. Shadow detail starts to degrade at ISO 3200, but both it and ISO 6400 are still acceptable.

Image quality deteriorates at the top three JPEG-only settings, and while ISO 12,800 is just about usable, ISO 25,600 and 51,200 are best left alone.

Adobe Camera Raw was unable to open the X100T's files at the time of writing, so we examined them in Fujifilm's Raw File Converter EX. Again, this showed excellent results at ISOs up to 1600, but lower quality at ISO 3200 and 6400.



The grey-card images above are JPEG files shot with the X100T's default noise-reduction and colour settings applied. The images are presented at 300ppi to reflect the noise that would be experienced when printing.

We see very clean images at ISO 200, and while some luminance noise

appears at ISO 800, you won't really see it in print. Noise is still mostly well suppressed at ISO 3200, but a little low-frequency colour blotching starts to appear. This is amplified at higher ISOs, and while ISO 12,800 isn't terrible, the two highest settings show it clearly.

The competition

Panasonic Lumix DMC-LX100

Price £699

With a fast zoom lens, this has a similar design to the X100, but a purely electronic viewfinder.

Ricoh GR

Price £469

A 28mm-equivalent lens and 16-million-pixel, APS-C sensor combine with a compact, tough magnesium-alloy body.

Leica X (Type 113)

Price £1,550

This has a 1/2-stop faster lens than the X100T, but no built-in viewfinder. The price is typically Leica.



	Panasonic Lumix DMC-LX100	Ricoh GR	Leica X (Type 113)
Sensor	12.8-million-pixel, four thirds MOS	16.2-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS	16.2-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS
Focal length	200-25,600	100-25,600	100-12,500
Mag	2.2x	1.5x	1.5x
ISO	24-75mm equiv, f/1.7-2.8	28mm equiv, f/2.8	35mm equiv, f/1.7
AF points	49	n/a	11
Display	3in, 921,000-dot LCD	3in, 1.23-million-dot LCD	3in, 920,000-dot TFT LCD
Viewfinder	1280 x 720-pixel EVF	Optional (optical)	Optional (electronic)
Dimensions	114.8 x 66.2 x 55mm	117 x 61 x 34.7mm	133 x 73 x 78mm
Weight	393g	245g	486g

Our verdict

WITH the same lens, sensor and image processor as its predecessor, it might be tempting to dismiss the X100T as a mere cosmetic update, designed as much to allow retailers to place a 'new' tag on an old product as anything else. At first glance it does little to dispel that impression, as it looks very much like the X100S and the X100 before it, but if you did think this, you'd be missing the point entirely.

To my mind, the X100T is as significant an update as the X100S was over the original model. Fujifilm has applied everything that it has learned from its X-system compact system cameras and ironed out all the handling quirks that beset the previous models. The result is a camera that just works, and does so really well.

All the little changes add up. Aperture setting in 1/3-stop increments, ±3-stop exposure compensation, optional direct AF area setting via the D-pad, manual-focus check in the OVF,

improved viewfinder displays – all these have a positive effect on the shooting experience. Add in the small refinements like Wi-Fi and USB charging capability, and the X100T just becomes a much more serious and versatile tool.

With all the best bits of the previous versions left intact – the intuitive dial-led handling, excellent image quality and unique hybrid viewfinder – the X100T is a hugely capable camera that's really enjoyable to use. The stunning good looks merely amplify its appeal.

Previous X100 models have had this section of the market almost to themselves, but the X100T now faces some pretty stiff competition, most notably from the Panasonic Lumix DMC-LX100. This has similar analogue controls, along with a fast zoom lens, micro four thirds sensor and 4K video recording – all at a lower price. But if you can live without a zoom and aren't overly concerned with video, the X100T is very difficult to beat.



FEATURES	8/10
BUILD & HANDLING	9/10
METERING	8/10
AUTOFOCUS	7/10
AWB & COLOUR	9/10
DYNAMIC RANGE	9/10
IMAGE QUALITY	9/10
VIEWFINDER/LCD	9/10

Cactus Wireless Flash Transceiver V6

Want to give your existing flash a new lease of life? The **Cactus V6** allows you to use almost any brand of flash wirelessly with any type of camera.

Callum McInerney-Riley gives his verdict

Cactus is a wireless studio lighting equipment designer and manufacturer based in Hong Kong. It specialises in products such as wireless flash triggers, wireless portable flashes, laser triggers, and other lighting and camera accessories. One of these is the new Cactus V6.

While it may have started life as a humble flash trigger, the sixth generation of the Cactus offers something no other device does. It can fire a multitude of flash brands from almost any camera with a standard ISO hotshoe or PC sync port, while being able to adjust the power output remotely. Canon, Nikon, Fujifilm, Olympus or Panasonic cameras can be used to fire Canon, Nikon, Olympus, Panasonic or Pentax-fit flashes.

The V6 has a variety of uses for all sorts of different photographers, particularly those who use both a DSLR and a compact system camera. It allows photographers to use DSLR flashes with CSCs, without needing to buy a whole new flash kit. Equally, though, the V6 is useful for any photographer who wants to start using off-camera flash and is on a budget. With the Cactus V6, it's possible to scout around for bargain-price flashes without being limited by compatibility.

Features

Most flash-triggering systems need a transmitter attached to the camera and a receiver attached to each flash that users wish to fire. The Cactus V6 works slightly differently, because it is what is known as a transceiver, meaning it can do the job of both the receiver *and* the transmitter. In order to use flash off-camera, you will need one Cactus V6 mounted on the camera and one on each flash. A button on the side of the unit can be switched to use it either as a receiver or a transmitter. Cactus also makes a flashgun called the RF60, which has the same transceiver technology built into the unit. It boasts a decent specification sheet and a street price of around £120, so if you're buying into new kit, it's worth taking a look at that option first.



The Cactus v6 can be used as both a transmitter and a receiver

There are some other triggering systems that can fire various brands of flashes from a different brand of camera, but their big drawback is that the flashes have to be in full manual mode. The Cactus V6 can be used in this way, but its unique feature is that users can

program in the flash they are using and then remotely adjust the power output. Flashguns have varying guide

numbers and ranges, so more than 30 different flashes have been profiled and pre-installed on the Cactus V6. This includes popular flashguns, such as Canon, Nikon, Pentax, Sigma, Metz, Nissin, Phottix, Yongnuo and Godox units. A full list can be found on Cactus's website.

Cactus is also committed to adding more profiles with firmware updates, which are installed via a Micro USB port on the side. However, should the flash not be recognised, there's a chance that the Cactus V6 will learn its profile, provided that it has analogue TTL.



This was lit by a single Nikon SB-700 positioned to the left and modified by a 42 x 42cm Lastolite Ezybox II



I took several versions of this shot, each time lowering the power a little in order to get the right intensity of light

Build and handling

Measuring 72mm both ways across and 42mm deep, the Cactus V6 weighs 62g, including its two AA batteries. For comparison, it's similar in size to the Pocket Wizard Flex TT5 transceiver.

The V6 has an all-metal hotshoe that I found very easy to slide on and off the camera, and a lever-locking mechanism secures the trigger in place. The body is constructed from plastic, and lacks the build quality of some of its more expensive competitors.

The menus are navigated using the buttons and scroll wheel at the rear of the unit, and all options are viewable on the LCD. They're neatly displayed and easy to navigate, too.

Performance

The Cactus V6 is straightforward to use. Once the flash is programmed in on a receiver unit, users can adjust the power of the flash from another V6, in transmitter mode. Each additional flash attached to a separate receiver will be put into different groups – either A, B, C or D. Using the selection dial on the rear of the V6, users can set the power of each individual flash quickly and easily. You can also adjust the power of multiple flashes at the same time.

The tricky thing about mixing different flashes is that most will have different power levels. For this reason, there is an option called Absolute Power Control. This benchmarks the guide number of each flash and matches the light intensity. The flashes can then be adjusted in EV numbers. This means that no matter what brand of flash is being used, the power will be adjusted equally. Some models of flash can be adjusted in 0.1EV increments, even if this isn't offered on the flashgun itself.

Optical slave triggering is also on offer. This means the V6 can be connected to a flashgun set to manual power, and it will be triggered by another flash. It's even possible to set the device to ignore a metering pre-flash. I find optical slave

functionality particularly useful in the studio to quickly and easily drop a backlight into the scene.

Programming in the flash profile is fairly straightforward. For my Canon 580EX II, the set-up took next to no time, and moments later I was using a Panasonic Lumix DMC-GM5 to fire two 580EX II flashes. However, when using a Nikon SB-700, it was more complicated and I needed a couple of tries to make it work.

I used a set of V6 units to shoot the fungi close-ups here, with a Canon DSLR and Nikon and Canon flash units. Macro subjects usually only need low flash power output, and I was able to sync the power of the two flashguns easily and use them at low power to add subtle lighting to my subjects. I found that once they were set up, they were super-easy to control.

During testing I found that the Cactus V6 misfired a couple of times, but this is quite normal with remote flash triggers.

AP

Using the Cactus, it's possible to mix different flashes and camera brands



Our verdict

WITH technology moving on so quickly, and photographers themselves always exploring new areas and styles of working, it's increasingly commonplace for them to change cameras or own a number of different types. While some photographers stick to the same brand, it's not always possible to do so. For those who shoot with a variety of different brands, the Cactus V6 offers an inexpensive way to build an off-camera flash kit for all your cameras. Recently, a lot of photographers who use Fujifilm compact system cameras have adopted this as their off-camera triggering system for that very reason.

The more expensive flash triggers on the market usually have the ability to shoot with flashes in TTL mode. In short, this is like having flashes in auto mode. That's fantastic for situations such as weddings and events where the photographer needs to capture the action in one shot and doesn't have time to go back and make changes. However, in situations where the photographer has enough time to adjust the power manually, it's normally by far the best option. Although TTL triggers can often be adjusted up and down, it's only adjusting a prediction, while the Cactus V6 is adjusting an exact output. So, if time isn't an issue, then the V6 offers everything a photographer is likely to need inside a trigger costing just £50.

The functionality the V6 boasts could easily cost four times that price. Of course, the downside of anything built to be inexpensive is that the construction quality doesn't compare to many of the more expensive options. However, the device's plastic case appears to be robust enough. In summary, the Cactus V6 is one of the best-value flash triggering systems currently available, and offers a wealth of features to satisfy everyone from the beginner to the enthusiast off-camera flash photographer.

Data file

Price £49.99
Radio frequency 2.4 GHz
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Camera voltage Up to 6V
Flash trigger voltage Up to 300V
Power 2 x AA
Dimensions 72 x 72 x 42mm
Weight 68g

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Swirly bokeh effects

Q I recently saw that a friend from a forum I frequently visit was posting pictures in her online portfolio of a lovely portrait featuring some kind of swirling background effect. Has she achieved this using Photoshop or some kind of filter, perhaps? I have sent her a private message, but as yet have not had a response, so I thought I'd write in.

Courtney Mark

A We reviewed a lens from Lomography in conjunction with Russian manufacturer Zenit that can produce the effect you describe (see AP 15 November). Called the Lomography Petzval Art lens, it is designed on a mid-19th century lens and created specifically to produce a swirly bokeh effect. The effect is most pronounced when shooting with a wide aperture, but uniquely this lens features a manual aperture plate system. The largest aperture provided is f/2.2, but I was able to get attractive background blurring up to about f/5.6.

Jon Devo

Quality question

Q I am using Adobe Lightroom 5.6 on a Mac running OS 10.9. Having bought a Nikon D7100, I was hoping for great results, but the image quality on anything over ISO 200 is awful – and unusable by ISO 1000 when shooting raw. However, a friend who edited the same card from the camera in Adobe Photoshop Elements had perfect results from the images, which were practically grainless up to ISO 3200. Can you tell me whether the problem is somewhere in the settings in Lightroom?

Roy Fisher



This 'swirly bokeh' effect is an optical signature of lenses like the Petzval

A A modern DSLR such as the D7100 should be able to achieve very acceptable results up to at least ISO 1600, and often higher, without any special processing. So if you're struggling to get as good results in Lightroom as your friend can achieve using the same raw files in Elements, then I'd have to agree

with your suggestion that something is wrong with your development settings. The two programs should give practically identical results, as they're based on the same routines and algorithms, and share many of the same settings options.

Lightroom is a complex program, though, and it can be tricky to work out what's wrong, especially if you haven't really found your way around it yet. Without seeing the images, it's difficult for me to diagnose the problem, but for a start I'd recommend checking two possibilities. The first is your noise-reduction parameters, which are found in the Detail tab. If they are set too low, your images will appear noisy. The screenshot below shows the relevant tab – if the sliders are set to zero or a low value, you'll see noise in your images. It's important to realise that noise reduction is a key component of image processing. It trades detail against noise, but done properly it improves images.



Lightroom's noise reduction settings are found in the Detail tab



BLAST FROM THE PAST

Canon EOS-1D Mark III

Ian Burley examines a paparazzi-friendly Canon professional model from 2007

LAUNCHED May 2007

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CANON launched the EOS-1D Mark III as a 10-million-pixel pro sports and wildlife DSLR that could shoot up to 110 JPEG frames at an astonishing 10 frames per second. With its telephoto-friendly APS-H CMOS sensor and dual Digic image processors, this was also the paparazzi's dream camera.

What's good Although it bore a close resemblance to previous EOS-1D models, Canon said the Mark III was a completely new design, with 19 cross-type AF points supplementing 26 other points, dual Digic III image processors and a new 10-million-pixel, APS-H CMOS sensor, which remains a respectable performer seven years after its launch.

What's bad One thing dogged what was, on paper, a remarkable camera – reliability and accuracy problems with the Mark III's sophisticated AF system. It was unclear whether this was a mechanical or firmware issue, but Canon had to respond to a lot of service calls.



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Technical Support

The second possible culprit could be your settings for saving your images. The most common file format is JPEG because it can give visually indistinguishable results to lossless formats such as TIFF, but with a fraction of the file size. However, there's a trade-off between size and quality, and for photography it's important to err on the side of quality. I'd usually recommend using a compression level of 80 for high-quality files that are not excessively large.

Andy Westlake

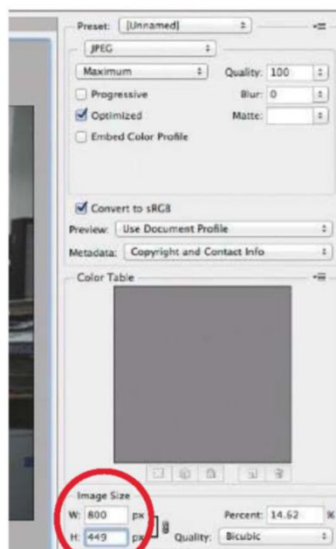
Size matters

Q I want to upload my photos to my online portfolio, but even when I set the resolution to 0 in Photoshop Elements and try to upload them, I

get a rejection/error notice stating that my images are still too large. How is that possible? **Alva Pratt**

A When uploading images online, you need to pay attention to the image's size in terms of pixels, or px. Resolution typically refers to print output size, and this may be what is causing confusion.

When uploading to the web, you'll rarely need an image size in excess of 1,000 pixels, and typically most sites will have space for images around 620-800 pixels wide. Also, many image editing and processing tools will have a Save As... or Save-for-web function that will allow you to see image file size and adjust pixel size appropriately. **Jon Devo**



When saving images for the web, pay attention to the pixel dimensions

HOW IT WORKS

I am
your

Aspherical lens element

I AM AN aspherical lens element and I have helped to improve the optical quality of camera lenses in recent years. You may have seen 'Asph' or 'Aspheric' marked on a camera lens or in lens specifications. It's now widely regarded as a mark of excellence. In a perfect world, all lenses would work like a pinhole camera lens. This would mean there would be no distortion, and focus would be uniform across the frame.

However, pinhole lenses are completely impractical because they are very dark and you can't use them to enjoy effects such as selective focus and blurring for creative effect. This is why a combination of glass lenses and lenses of other materials – including optical plastics – are used in modern camera lens designs.

Lens elements, whether concave, convex etc, were originally composed of surfaces that represented part of a perfect sphere. The problem with this is that there are situations where such combinations of 'spherical' lenses can't project an image that is uniformly focused across

the flat surface of the camera sensor or film plane. This is most apparent when using medium to wide apertures where the depth of focus (not to be confused with depth of field) is narrow. Aspherical lenses, where the curve of the lens element surface is no longer part of a perfect sphere, can be used to correct such focusing aberrations.

Aspheric lenses result in sharper images, especially at wider apertures, and can also be designed to minimise other optical imperfections such as chromatic aberrations. Aspherical lenses like us are more challenging to manufacture, which makes us more expensive. Very often, we are produced by moulding molten glass rather than being ground into shape from solid glass blanks. Manufacturing techniques have improved, and while we used to be exclusive to expensive and exotic lenses, we're now appearing in much more affordable cameras and interchangeable lenses.

Modern lenses like this Canon 24-70mm f/2.8 II use aspherical elements to correct aberrations



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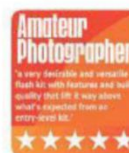
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In the bag



Nicholas Goodden is an award-winning London-based urban photographer, Olympus ambassador and founder of the Street Photography London collective



© NICHOLAS GOODDEN

Olympus OM-D E-M1

1 This is my workhorse. I don't need to introduce this highly acclaimed camera any more. It's reliable, has great image quality, is lighter and smaller than heavy DSLRs, and none of my clients has ever complained of the work I've delivered with it – in fact, quite the opposite.

Voigtlander 17.5mm f/0.95

2 If I had to choose one micro four thirds lens, this would be it. It's very well built and super-sharp. Although manual focus only and super-heavy, it's still the best. It gives your photos a unique quality that is quite addictive.

Panasonic Leica 25mm f/1.4

3 When I get tired of focusing manually, this is my next favourite lens. It's great for street photography, performs magically in low-lit events and has a super-fast autofocus. It never ceases to amaze me and has an image quality worthy of the Leica brand.



Heavy Leather NYC camera strap

4 This camera strap is a key part of my gear. I recently reviewed the best leather camera straps around, and Heavy Leather NYC came out top for comfort, originality and serious cool factor. It does what it should do without advertising any camera brand.

Phantom 2 Vision+

5 Not pictured. I don't use the Phantom 'flying camera' for commercial work, but we all need a holiday. Shooting aerial landscape photography for pleasure is my break from urban photography. These fantastic cameras should be used responsibly, so I stick to the countryside. Highly recommended.

List of kit Olympus OM-D E-M1, Olympus OM-D E-M5, Olympus M Zuiko Digital ED 12-40mm f/2.8, Voigtlander 17.5mm f/0.95, Panasonic Lumix G X Vario 35-100mm f/2.8, Panasonic Leica DG Macro-Elmarit 45mm f/2.8 Aspherical Mega OIS, Panasonic Leica DG Summilux 25mm f/1.4 Asph, Olympus M Zuiko Digital ED 12-50mm f/3.5-6.3 EZ, Samyang 7.5mm f/3.5 fisheye, Olympus FL-600R wireless flash, Vanguard Alta Pro 263AB 100 tripod with ball head, B+W ND110 (52mm) ND filter (for long-exposure landscapes in daylight), Hoya R72 (52mm) infrared filter (for urban landscapes), Domke camera bag (for day use), Lowepro Pro Messenger 200AW (carries all my gear), A7 camera strap, Heavy Leather NYC camera strap



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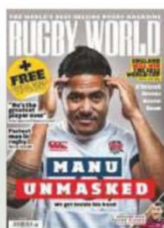
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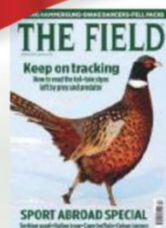
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Index to advertisers

Appleworld Distribution.....Cover: iv

Calumet Photographic Ltd.....43

Cambrian Photography Ltd.....86

Cameworld.....74-75

Camera Centre Cardiff Ltd.....80-81

Camtech.....63, 65

Clifton Cameras.....22

Digital Depot.....40

EISA.....12

Fjorides Photographic Ltd.....78-79

Grays of Westminster.....32-33, 86

Intro 2020 Ltd.....18

Manfrotto Dist Ltd.....31

Mifsud Photographic.....82-83

Mr Cad.....85

Nicholas Camera Company.....70

Nikon UK Ltd.....Cover: ii

Park Cameras Ltd.....71-73, Cover: iii

Premier Ink & Photographic.....76-77

Point 101.....63

Richard Caplan.....69

Samsung Electronics UK Ltd.....58

Sony Information Technology.....9

Special Auction Services.....84

SRS Ltd.....64

T4 Cameras.....69

The Flash Centre.....60

The Imaging Warehouse.....63

Tiffen International Ltd.....27

UK Photodistro Ltd.....86

Wex Photographic.....51, 66-68

Classified.....87-89



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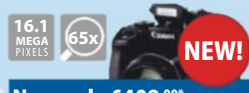
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PRINTER INK CARTRIDGES



EPSON

COMPATIBLE & ORIGINAL INK



At Premier Ink Supplies, we stock two types of cartridges for Epson printers - **Originals**, which are made by Epson, and **Compatibles**, which are made by a UK company called **Jet Tec**. Using **Jet Tec Compatibles** is a way of saving money, without compromising on the quality of your prints. Here're the results from two independent ink tests that agree...

Digital
PHOTOGRAPHY

Ink Test Winner



"Jet Tec's colours were superb, with single greys and blacks very close to Epson ...so Jet Tec wins!"
- Total Digital Photography Magazine

"What we're looking at here is not only the best choice of ink for the R300 printer, but also the best ink in this group test, period. There's just no getting away from the superb combination of performance and pricing!"
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T008 Colour	£23.99 46ml	£4.99 50ml, 3 for £13.99	Photo 790, 870, 890, 915, 915
T009 Colour	£29.99 66ml	£4.99 70ml, 3 for £13.99	Photo 900, 1270, 1290
T026 Black	£39.99 16ml	£3.99 20ml, 3 for £10.99	Photo 810, 830, 830u, 925, 935
T027 Colour	£29.99 46ml	£4.99 50ml, 3 for £13.99	
T0341-T0347 Set of 7	£126.99 set of 7	Check Website.	Photo 2100
T0341/8, each	£15.99 17ml	Check Website.	Chameleon Inks
T0342/3/4, each	£18.99 17ml	Check Website.	
T0345/6/7, each	£18.99 17ml	Check Website.	
T0441-T0454 Set of 4	£49.99 set of 4	£14.99, 3 sets for £42.99	C64, C66, C84, C86, CX3800/3850, CX4600, CX6600
T0452/3/4, each	£11.99 8ml	£4.99 21ml, 3 for £13.99	Parasol Inks
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T0484/5/6, each	£16.99 13ml	£3.99 21ml, 3 for £10.99	Seahorse Inks
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T0541/2/3/4, each	£14.99 13ml	£4.99 21ml, 3 for £13.99	Photo R240, R245, RX420, RX425, RX520, RX525
T0547/8/9, each	£14.99 13ml	£4.99 21ml, 3 for £13.99	Duck Inks
T0551-T0554 Set of 4	£34.99 set of 4	£14.99, 3 sets for £42.99	Photo R2400
T0551 Black	£8.99 8ml	£4.99 21ml, 3 for £10.99	Lilly Inks
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T0594/5/6, each	£12.99 13ml	Check Website.	S20, S21, SX100/105/110/115/200/205/210/215
T0597/8/9, each	£12.99 13ml	Check Website.	SX400/405/415/515, D78/82/120, B40W, B4300
T0611-T0614 Set of 4	£34.99 set of 4	£14.99, 3 sets for £42.99	DX4000/4400/5000/6000/7000/7400/8400/9400
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T0612/3/4, each	£8.99 8ml	£3.99 21ml, 3 for £10.99	Owl Inks
T0711-T0714 Set of 4	£34.99 set of 4	£14.99, 3 sets for £42.99	Photo P60, PX650/660/700W/710W/720WD, PX730WD/800FW/810FW/830FW/830FWD
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T0791-T0796 Set of 6	£74.99 set of 6	Check Website.	Flamingo Inks
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T1291-T1294 Set of 4	£42.99 set of 4	£16.99 set of 4	
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T1292/3/4, each	£10.99 7.7ml	£4.99 13ml	
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AA 2000mAh GP Raycho (4)	£7.99
AA 2000mAh Energizer Extreme (4)	£8.99
AA 2000mAh GP (4)	£8.99
AA 2900mAh Delkin (4)	£9.99
AAA 600mAh GP Raycho (4)	£5.99
AAA 650mAh Duracell (4)	£6.99
AAA 1100mAh Lloytron (4)	£4.99

Coin Cells & Lithiums

AA Energizer Ultimate Lithium (4)	£5.99
AAA Energizer Ultimate Lithium (4)	£6.99
CR123A Energizer Lithium (1)	£1.99
CR2 Energizer Lithium (1)	£1.99
2CR5 Energizer Lithium (1)	£3.99
CRV3 Energizer Lithium (1)	£5.99
LR44 Energizer Alkaline (2)	£1.99
CR2025, CR2032 etc	£1.99

SCREW-IN FILTERS

KODAK Slim Frame UV Filters		Marumi DHG Slim Frame Multicoated Clear Protection Filters		Hoya HMC Slim Frame Multicoated UV Filters	
46mm	£4.99	46mm	£10.99	37mm	£12.99
49mm	£4.99	49mm	£10.99	46mm	£12.99
52mm	£4.99	52mm	£10.99	52mm	£11.99
55mm	£5.99	55mm	£11.99	58mm	£14.99
58mm	£6.99	58mm	£12.99	62mm	£16.99
62mm	£7.99	62mm	£14.99	67mm	£18.99
67mm	£8.99	67mm	£15.99	72mm	£21.99
72mm	£9.99	72mm	£17.99	77mm	£25.99
77mm	£11.99	77mm	£19.99	82mm	£29.99
82mm	£14.99	82mm	£22.99		
86mm	£19.99				
KODAK Slim Frame Circular Polarising Filters		Marumi DHG Slim Frame Multicoated Circular Polarising Filters		Hoya Pro-1 Digital Slim Frame Multicoated Circular Polarising Filters	
46mm	£12.99	52mm	£13.99	52mm	£27.99
52mm	£14.99	58mm	£15.99	58mm	£32.99
55mm	£15.99	62mm	£17.99	62mm	£35.99
58mm	£17.99	67mm	£19.99	67mm	£39.99
62mm	£19.99	72mm	£21.99	72mm	£44.99
67mm	£22.99	77mm	£24.99	77mm SPECIAL	£39.99
72mm	£26.99			82mm	£56.99
77mm	£29.99				
82mm	£34.99				
86mm	£39.99				
KODAK Close Up Filter Sets (+1, +2 & +4)		Marumi DHG Slim Frame Multicoated Circular Polarising Filters		Hoya Pro-1 Digital Slim Frame Multicoated Circular Polarising Filters	
52mm	£26.99	52mm	£31.99	52mm	£52.99
58mm	£34.99	58mm	£35.99	58mm	£60.99
		62mm	£39.99	62mm	£67.99
		67mm	£44.99	67mm	£75.99
		72mm	£49.99	72mm	£90.99
		77mm	£54.99	77mm SPECIAL	£79.99
		82mm	£69.99	82mm	£120.99

SQUARE FILTERS

KODAK P-Type Filter System

The P-Type square/rectangular filter system consists of three parts:

- 1) An adapter ring that screws onto the front of your lens
- 2) A filter holder clips onto the ring
- 3) One or more P-Type (84mm wide) filters

KODAK square filters are manufactured in the UK, and are fully compatible with the Cokin P-Type filter system

49mm Adapter Ring	£4.99	Circular Polarizing	£29.99
52mm Adapter Ring	£4.99	ND2	£9.99
55mm Adapter Ring	£4.99	ND4	£9.99
58mm Adapter Ring	£4.99	ND8 NEW	£10.99
62mm Adapter Ring	£4.99	ND2 Soft Graduated	£11.99
67mm Adapter Ring	£4.99	ND2 Hard Graduated	£11.99
72mm Adapter Ring	£4.99	ND4 Soft Graduated	£11.99
77mm Adapter Ring	£4.99	ND4 Hard Graduated	£11.99
82mm Adapter Ring	£4.99	ND8 Soft Graduated NEW	£13.99
Standard Holder	£5.99	ND8 Hard Graduated NEW	£13.99
Wide Angle Holder	£6.99	Light Blue Graduated	£11.99
Filter Wallet (hold 8 filters)	£9.99	Dark Blue Graduated	£11.99

Six-Piece ND Filter Kit £43.99

Here's a kit which includes all the popular ND filters, and everything you need to get started! The kit contains: 1x ND2 Filter, 1x ND4 Filter, 1x ND8 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x P-Type Filter Holder, 1x P-Type Adapter Ring of your choice (49-82mm).

LENS HOOD & CAPS

Bayonet-Fit Lens Hoods

A comprehensive range of all-weather matt black bayonet-fit lens hoods for Canon, Nikon and Sony lenses.

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ES-711 Canon 501.4	£9.99
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ET-65B Canon 70-300/4.5-6	£9.99
ET-67 Canon 100/2.8 Macro	£9.99
ET-67B Canon 60/2.8	£9.99
EW-60C Canon 18-55 IS	£7.99
EW-73B Canon 17-85 IS	£9.99
EW-78B Canon 28-135 IS	£9.99
EW-78D Canon 18-200 IS	£9.99
EW-78E Canon 18-55 IS	£12.99
EW-83E Canon 17-40/4.0	£12.99
EW-83J Canon 17-55/2.8	£12.99
HB-45 Nikon 18-55 VR	£7.99
SH-006 Sony 18-70/3.5-5.6	£9.99

Screw-Fit Lens Hoods

52mm Shaped Petal Hood	£6.99
55mm Shaped Petal Hood	£6.99
58mm Shaped Petal Hood	£6.99
62mm Shaped Petal Hood	£7.99
67mm Shaped Petal Hood	£7.99
72mm Shaped Petal Hood	£9.99
46mm Rubber Hood	£3.99
52mm Rubber Hood	£3.99
58mm Rubber Hood	£3.99
62mm Rubber Hood	£4.99
67mm Rubber Hood	£4.99
72mm Rubber Hood	£5.99
77mm Rubber Hood	£5.99

Lens Caps

Lens Caps Centre-Pinch Style	£2.99
Lens Caps White Balance	£9.99
Body Caps Ni/Ca/Px/O/So	£3.99
Rear Caps Ni/Ca/Px/O/So	£3.99

STEPPING RINGS & MACRO

Step-Up and Step-Down Rings

Stepping rings are used to "step-up" or "step-down" from one filter thread size to another.

34-37mm	52-55mm	58-55mm	67-62mm
37-43mm	52-58mm	58-62mm	67-77mm
43-48mm	52-58mm	58-67mm	67-77mm
46-49mm	55-58mm	62-67mm	72-77mm
49-52mm	58-52mm	62-72mm	77-72mm

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Coupling Rings	£12.99
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Canon, Nikon, Sony, Olympus and Pentax.

Right Angle Viewfinders

Adjustable eyepiece, adjustable magnification, 360 degree rotating body. Ideal for close-up work.

1.0X-2.0X	£49.99
1.0X-3.3X	£64.99

TRIPODS

VANGUARD

Vanguard AltaPRO263AT
Aluminium 3-section tripod with magnesium canopy and Multi-Angle-Central-Column.
Weight: 2.00kg
Load: 7.0kg
Folded: 65cm
Height: 165cm
RRP £160 **NOW £89.99**

SBH100
Magnesium alloy ball head with grip, twin adjuster knobs, 2 split levels, quick release plate.
Weight: 0.39kg
Load: 10.0kg
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SAVE AltaPRO263AT+SBH100 **£120** RRP £250 **NOW £129.99**
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804RC2
Sturdy three way pan and tilt head with RC2 quick release.
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Load: 4.0kg
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Height: 151cm
Weight: 0.60kg
Load: 5.0kg
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RRP £45 **NOW £34.99**

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Carbon Fibre 4-section monopod.
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Load: 5.0kg
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75-300mm F4.5-5.6 AF.....	E- E49
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55-200mm F4-5.6 AFS DX G.....	Unused E109
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30D body	£139	50 F1.4 FD	£29	50 F1.8 AFD box	£179	50 F1.8 AFD box	£79	12-60 F2.8 8.5 M	£499	50 F2.8	£299
20D body	£149	50 F1.8 FL	£29	50 F1.8 AFD box	£179	50 F1.8 AFD box	£79	12-60 F2.8 8.5 M	£499	50 F2.8	£299
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Photographica Auctions Express - 20 January Fine – 19 February



Fine lots in our recent and upcoming sales

Our Fine and Express sales in September and October realised around £250,000, with exceptional prices realised for lenses by Dallmeyer, Ross and Hugo Meyer. We are currently taking in consignments for our upcoming auctions and are now the largest camera auction house in the United Kingdom. For our recent sales we have travelled all over the country collecting cameras and photographs of all types and values, which we sell to buyers around the world. Our next sales already include rarities such as a Redding & Gyles 'Luzo', a Leica 250GG Reporter, a Reid I and a host of Leica, Nikon and Canon.

For further information, or to get a valuation, please contact Jonathan Brown or Hugo Marsh on:
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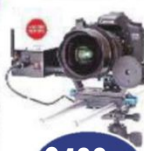
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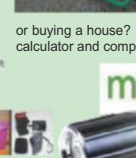
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Final Analysis

Roger Hicks considers... Indira Gandhi and Jacqueline Kennedy, 1962, by Homai Vyarawalla

Homai Vyarawalla (1913-2012) arguably achieved more with her own talents than either of her subjects here. She was 'only' a photographer, and almost 50 when she took this picture. But look at the two people in the photo. One was a trophy bride (twice over – remember Onassis), while the other was a carefully constructed political creature of the Congress Party. Indira-ji was the daughter of Pandit Nehru, but clad herself in the name of the father of free India, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. She was no relation to the Mahatma: she married a man called Feroze Gandhi. Her political legacy is at best controversial. When she ordered the attack on the Golden Temple in Amritsar in June 1984 to oust Sri Bhindranwale, whom she had backed as an excuse to impose martial law on the Punjab, many said at the time that she had just committed suicide. So it proved in October that year.

And yet, everyone has heard of both Jacqueline Kennedy and Indira Gandhi. Few have heard of Homai Vyarawalla. The nature of history makes it unlikely that this will change. This picture teaches us a great deal about the gulf between politics and what we might perhaps unfairly call 'real life'. Remember this when you consider your own career.

Symbolism and frivolity

Despite these caveats, this is a gorgeous picture, laden with symbolism. For a start, both Gandhi and Kennedy are seated on an elaborate swing. To a considerable extent, swings are associated with frivolity and sexuality: think of Fragonard's



© HOMAI VYARAWALLA ARCHIVE IN THE ALAKA COLLECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHY

'Vyarawalla's shot emphasises the contrast between the two women while also sending an underlying message'

painting *The Swing*, 1767. Vyarawalla's shot emphasises the contrast between the two women while sending an underlying message. Gandhi is dressed in a sari, with Kennedy in a short skirt that shows off her legs. This is effectively a reverse Orientalist metaphor for Indian and American

politics. Kennedy is nearer and bigger, celebrity versus substance, or alternatively, a political take on the USA versus India. In addition, of course, there's a contrast between tradition and modernity, modesty and brashness.

Although black & white was the norm for the time, today it

conveys gravitas, a sense of history and of photography for the record. Technically, too, there is a wonderful tonality to the original print, which, to the best of my knowledge, was modestly enlarged from a Rollei negative. But is this purely technical? Does not the richness of the tonality echo the richness (and perhaps even the frivolity) of the subject matter? Pictures often contain resonances and undertones of which we are not immediately consciously aware.



Roger Hicks has been writing about photography since 1981 and has published more than three dozen books on the subject, many in partnership with his wife Frances Schultz (visit his website at www.rogerandfrances.com). Every week in this column Roger deconstructs a classic or contemporary photograph. Next week he considers an image by Jean-Pierre Fizez

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Saturday 30 August 2014

Amateur Photographer

**FEATURING
10 SLRS, 18 CSCS AND
12 ADVANCED COMPACTS**

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**Your essential guide to
new camera launches of 2014**

Canon EOS 1200D
Canon EOS 7D Mark II
Nikon D3300
Nikon D750
Nikon D810
Nikon D4S
Pentax K-S1
Sony Alpha 77 II
Pentax 645Z
Leica S and S-E

Fujifilm X-T1
Leica T
Nikon 1 V3
Nikon 1 J4
Nikon 1 S2
Pentax Q-S1
Olympus OM-D E-M10
Olympus Pen E-PL7
Panasonic Lumix DMC-GH4
Panasonic Lumix DMC-GH5

Samsung NX30
Samsung NX1
Samsung NX3000
Samsung NX mini
Sony Alpha 5000 and 5100
Sony Alpha 6000
Sony Alpha 7S
Sony QX1
Canon PowerShot G1 X Mark II
Canon PowerShot G7 X

Canon PowerShot SX60 HS
Fujifilm X30
Fujifilm X100T
Leica X
Panasonic Lumix DMC-CM1
Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ60
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Canon EOS 1200D

An affordable entry-level model for the first-time DSLR user

THE CANON EOS 1200D uses an 18-million-pixel, APS-C-format CMOS sensor, which is a significant increase in resolution over the 12.2-million-pixel chip found in its predecessor, the EOS 1100D. This sensor is paired with a Canon Digic 4 image processor to facilitate a burst speed of 3fps up to a maximum of 69 consecutive JPEG files or six raw images.

The EOS 1200D is bundled with an 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 kit lens that has a newly developed image stabilisation (IS) system. Features include a fixed 3in, 460,000-dot TFT LCD screen and 1080p full HD video at 30, 25 or 24fps. Battery life is around 500 shots per charge, though – 200 shots fewer than the EOS 1100D.

With a 63-area, colour-sensitive metering system, the EOS 1200D delivers accurate exposures with the camera striking a good balance between shadow and highlight detail. The auto white balance

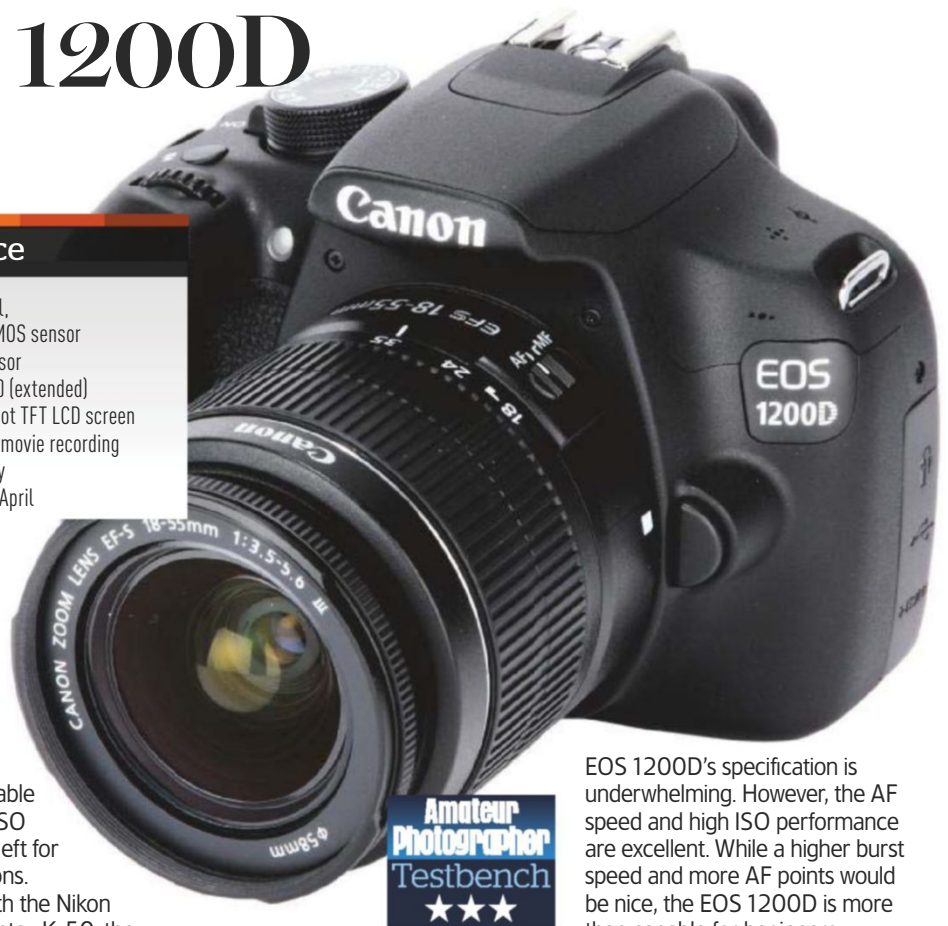
At a glance

- 18-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor
- Digic 4 processor
- ISO 100-12,800 (extended)
- 3in, 460,000-dot TFT LCD screen
- Full HD 1080p movie recording
- £280 body only
- Tested: AP 26 April

setting delivers accurate colour, and there's little sign of either luminance or colour noise between ISO 100 and 1600.

Images at ISO 6400 are printable at A4 size, but ISO 12,800 is best left for extreme situations.

Compared with the Nikon D3300 and Pentax K-50, the



EOS 1200D's specification is underwhelming. However, the AF speed and high ISO performance are excellent. While a higher burst speed and more AF points would be nice, the EOS 1200D is more than capable for beginners.

Canon EOS 7D Mark II

Canon's latest high-end APS-C DSLR is aimed at sports and wildlife photographers

THE EOS 7D Mark II boasts two Digic 6 image processors, allowing shooting at up to 10fps, maintaining this speed indefinitely when shooting JPEGs or for up to 32 raw files. Its 20.2-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor is borrowed from the EOS 70D.

A brand-new AF system uses 65 focus points (all cross-type) with the centre point offering dual cross-type focusing at f/2.8. The latest generation AI Servo II is inherited from the EOS-1D X, as are the six autofocus 'case-study' settings for easier

At a glance

- 20.2-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor
- Dual Digic 6 processors
- ISO 100-51,200 (extended)
- 65-point AF system
- £1,600 body only
- Not yet tested

set-up. The EOS 7D Mark II uses Dual Pixel CMOS AF technology for video focusing, as seen in the EOS 70D, and can record full HD video at up to 60fps.

The viewfinder offers 100% coverage, and can overlay additional shooting info such as white balance and an electronic level. A new 150,000-pixel RGB+IR metering sensor promises accurate exposures. The body is weather-sealed, and has both SD and CompactFlash card slots. Surprisingly, though, it doesn't include Wi-Fi. Overall, the EOS 7D Mark II is a very impressive DSLR, but comes at a price to match.



Nikon D3300



With its 24.2-million-pixel sensor and no anti-aliasing filter, this diminutive entry-level camera has ideas above its station

WHILE the Nikon D3300 retains the class-leading 24.2-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor of its D3200 predecessor, the anti-aliasing filter has been removed to improve

sharpness. A new Expeed 4 image processor inside the D3300 increases the maximum ISO to 25,600 and boosts continuous shooting from 4fps to 5fps.

On the back, the D3300 has the same fixed 3in, 920,000-dot LCD as the D3200, as well as the same 420-pixel RGB sensor and 11-point AF system. The optical viewfinder has been improved, and now delivers 0.85x magnification compared to 0.78x previously. Autofocus performance is decent, with the 11 AF points well spread out across the frame.

At a glance

- 24.2-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor
- ISO 100-25,600 (extended)
- Expeed 4 image processor
- 3in, 920,000-dot LCD screen
- 11-point AF system
- £380 body only
- Tested: AP 8 March

Regarding image quality, the standard colour setting delivers a pleasingly natural palette, while the vivid preset mode adds extra oomph. Generally, the D3300 performs about as well as the Nikon D5300, and even the D7100 in terms of resolution, although it does seem to produce more noise at lower sensitivities.

While the D3300 lacks in-built Wi-Fi connectivity, this is probably understandable owing to the impressively low price. If you're after an entry-level DSLR with a high resolution, the D3300 should be near the top of your wish list.

Nikon D750

Sitting between the **D610** and **D810**, this camera is designed with the aspirational enthusiast photographer in mind

At a glance

- 24.3-million-pixel, full-frame CMOS sensor
- Built-in Wi-Fi
- 3.2in, 1.3-million-dot tiltable LCD screen
- ISO 50-51,200 (extended)
- Multi-CAM 3500FX II autofocus sensor module
- £1,800 body only
- Tested: AP 25 October

TAILORED for enthusiasts, while catering for both the hobbyist and aspiring professional, the D750 features a redesigned version of the 24.3-million-pixel sensor found in the D610. The presence of an optical low-pass filter distinguishes the D750 from the D810 and helps to prevent moiré patterning, although it does so at the expense of some finer detail reproduction.

The D750 is the first full-frame

Nikon DSLR to feature the monocoque design – a one-piece body previously seen on the D5300. The main benefit is a smaller size, measuring just 140.5 x 113 x 78mm. With a maximum shooting speed of 6.5fps and a native ISO range of 100-12,800 (extendable to ISO 50-51,200), it shoots faster and 1 stop higher than the D610. The D750 is also Nikon's first full-frame DSLR to feature a 3.2in, 1.3-million-dot screen with vari-angle functionality and built-in Wi-Fi connectivity.

A new Multi-CAM 3500FX II AF sensor module is included, which sports 51 AF points, 15 of which are cross-type. Colour rendition is much the same



as the D810 and the D750 can perform a spot white balance in live view.

The D750 is an excellent DSLR with almost every feature you could want. With a tilting LCD and Wi-Fi functionality, it's a full-frame DSLR that breaks new ground, and thanks to a modified grip it handles exceptionally well. It's one of the best all-round DSLRs available.

Nikon D810

A single model has replaced both the **D800** and **D800E**, complete with a 36.3-million-pixel sensor

WHAT makes the Nikon D810 notable is the fact that it is the first full-frame DSLR not to have an optical low-pass filter at all. It also features a new 36.3-million-pixel sensor design and a 3.2in LCD monitor with a 1.23-million-dot RGBW display.

The D810 has a wider range of image-capture formats too, including the new S Raw that captures uncompressed files at 9 million pixels. Despite the large file sizes it produces, it can shoot continuously at up to 5fps, or 6fps in DX crop mode.

There are several button-placement refinements on the D810, while the grip has a larger indentation for the middle finger and there's a larger thumb rest. The hefty magnesium-alloy body weighs in at 980g with battery and card, although the improved weather-sealing means it's built

At a glance

- 36.3-million-pixel, full-frame CMOS sensor
- No low-pass filter
- 3.2in, 1.23-million-dot LCD screen
- ISO 32-51,200 (extended)
- 51-point AF system
- £2,500 body only
- Tested: AP 16 August

to survive the toughest tests. Autofocus is lightning-fast, and although the 51 focus points are concentrated towards the middle, they can be altered between focus modes.

The improved colour accuracy of the LCD screen is instantly noticeable and enhances the image review process no end. The level of detail resolved by the sensor is truly stunning, and overall the Nikon D810 is a great upgrade.



Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
GOLD
★★★★★

Nikon D4S

It may look like its **D4** predecessor, but significant changes have been made to image processing, shooting rate and AF

WITH the D4S, Nikon has taken the best features from its D4 predecessor and built on them to produce a premium-grade DSLR for professional photographers. Continuous shooting of 11fps can be maintained for up to 104 consecutive 14-bit raw images or 200 fine large JPEG files, while a new Hi4 extended mode offers the equivalent of an incredible ISO 409,600.

In addition to the 30p, 25p and 24p full HD video-recording options offered by the D4, the D4S also offers 60p and 50p capture options. The D4S utilises the same Advanced Multi-CAM 3500FX system used in the D4 and its 51-point 3D tracking system is able to cope with fast-moving subjects. The colours

At a glance

- 16.2-million-pixel, full-frame (FX) CMOS sensor
- Expeed 4 image processor
- 1920 x 1080p full HD video at 60p, 50p, 30p, 25p and 24p
- 3.2in, 921,000-dot LCD screen
- ISO 50-409,600 (extended)
- £4,680 body only
- Tested: AP 12 April

produced by the D4S are realistic, while sensitivity performance retains pretty much the same amount of detail at ISO 12,800 as it does at ISO 100. As you would expect from a flagship pro-spec DSLR, the D4S is fully weather-sealed.

Although the D4S doesn't deliver a huge upgrade in general image quality over its D4 predecessor, images shot at lower to mid-ISO settings look a little better. This, along with a slightly faster burst mode and some improvements to AF performance, help to make the D4S a complete package for the professional photographer.



Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
GOLD
★★★★★

Pentax K-S1

This model is available in a range of colours and features an 'illumination interface'

At a glance

- 20.1-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor
- ISO 100-51,200
- 30-1/6000sec shutter speed
- 3in, 921,000-dot LCD screen
- £550 body only
- Not yet tested

THE PENTAX K-S1 is an entry-level DSLR featuring a 20.1-million-pixel, APS-C-sized imaging sensor. The camera's most visible standout feature is an 'illumination interface', which includes a number of LEDs on the handgrip that flash a countdown during self-timer shooting. The power switch also has an LED that lights green during still-image shooting, and changes colour to red during movie operation, while the rear mode dial is also illuminated. The camera comes

in a range of 15 colours, including 'fabric' and 'sweets' collections, alongside a more conservative black option.

Behind its quirky design, the K-S1 hides an impressive specification for its class. The viewfinder offers a magnification of 0.95x and 100% coverage, and the in-body image-stabilisation system includes a low-pass-filter simulation mode, as previously seen on the top-end Pentax K-3. Other features include full HD video, 5fps shooting and a top shutter speed of 1/6000sec. The 11-point AF system includes

nine cross-type areas. The K-S1 has a 3in, 921,000-dot LCD screen and a sensitivity range of ISO 100-51,200, while 21 image-processing filters are available, including colour replacement.

Overall, the K-S1 looks like it

should be a capable and well-featured DSLR, but the quirky and unconventional design may put off some more conservative buyers.



Sony Alpha 77 II

The Mark II version of the **Alpha 77** has added Wi-Fi, an improved screen and an overhauled AF system

THE ALPHA 77 II is Sony's latest SLT (single-lens translucent) model, which uses a 'translucent' mirror to direct light to its autofocus module while using an electronic viewfinder for composition. The camera features a 24.3-million-pixel, APS-C-sized Exmor CMOS sensor and Bionz X processor, which

together deliver an impressive continuous shooting performance of 12fps for 64 fine JPEGs or 25 consecutive JPEG + raw images before the buffer is full. The remarkable 79-point autofocus system enhances the camera's ability to track subjects, and in-body image stabilisation works with all lenses. The Alpha 77 II

has a weather-sealed, magnesium-alloy body with a wealth of external controls. The 3in LCD is fully

At a glance

- 24.3-million-pixel, APS-C-sized Exmor CMOS
- Bionz X processor
- ISO 100-25,600
- 3in, 1.23-million dot, fully articulated LCD
- 2.36-million-dot OLED EVF
- £930 body only
- Tested: AP 28 June

articulated, and the 2.36-million-dot OLED EVF one of the best we've seen. The camera also features NFC and Wi-Fi connectivity, and can be connected to an Android or iOS smartphone or tablet via the Sony PlayMemories app. Additional apps can be installed in the camera to add features such as time-lapse shooting.

The Alpha 77 II feels great in the hand, and the button placement allows users to change settings quickly. Images previewed at A4 or full-size on a computer monitor look detailed, even at higher ISO sensitivities. With the incredible array of features offered by its advanced AF, this camera is an excellent choice for enthusiast wildlife and sports photographers.



Amateur Photographer
Testbench
Recommended
★★★★

Pentax 645Z

Extraordinary results are possible with the 51.4-million-pixel, medium-format CMOS sensor



At £6,800 body only, the Pentax 645Z may be expensive in comparison to full-frame DSLRs like the Nikon D810, but it is good value compared to the likes of Hasselblad or Leica S (below) The 51.4-million-pixel, medium-format CMOS sensor measures 44 x 33mm, giving a focal-length multiplier of 0.8x. It offers a sensitivity range of ISO 100-204,800, compared to just ISO 1600 from the older 645D's CCD chip. It also allows full HD video capture (1920 x 1080 pixels) at 60i, 30p or 24p.

The 645Z uses a tilting 3.2in, 1.04-million-dot LCD screen, and the large optical viewfinder offers a 98% field of view. The camera takes Flucards and SD-sized cards that offer Wi-Fi connectivity, enabling not only image transfer to a smartphone or tablet, but also

At a glance

- 51.4-million-pixel (44 x 33mm) CMOS sensor
- ISO 100-204,800
- Pentax 645AF2 lens mount
- 0.8x crop factor
- 3.2in, 1.04-million dot tilting LCD screen
- £6,800 body only
- Tested: AP 4 October

remote control. The large weather-resistant body weighs 1,470g (body only) and has a control layout similar to top-end Pentax APS-C DSLRs.

Image quality is stunning, with the sensor recording an exceptional amount of detail and delivering impressive results at high ISOs – not previously a strong point of medium-format DSLRs. Handling is excellent, too. Overall, the 645Z is a hugely accomplished camera for landscape and studio work.

Leica S and S-E

A new medium-format model offers a redesigned CMOS sensor and 4K video capability, while the existing medium-format **S2** gets a makeover

AT PHOTOKINA 2014, Leica announced a new version of its flagship S camera (Type 007) for a 2015 launch. The S has a new Leica-designed, 37.5-million-pixel CMOS sensor that supports 4K video capture, plus sensitivities up to ISO 6400. At 30 x 45mm in size, it offers a 0.8x crop compared to full frame. The Maestro II processor enables a faster 3.5-frames-per-second still-image burst rate, and the camera promises quicker autofocus and predictive AF.

The S also includes a built-in GPS module, new dual-axis spirit level, built-in Wi-Fi and a 3in, 921,600-dot screen. The OLED display on the top-plate has been redesigned to be easier to read, but otherwise the body is very similar in looks to the previous model. The new S is due out in spring 2015, priced £18,720.

Leica also unveiled the S-E (Type 006), which is essentially

a cosmetic redesign of the existing S2 medium-format DSLR that uses a 37.5-million-pixel CCD sensor rather than a CMOS unit. It's slightly more affordable than the S, with a body-only price of £12,480. Both cameras use Leica's line of purpose-designed S-mount autofocus lenses, several of which are available in versions with leaf shutters that give high sync speeds when shooting with flash.



At a glance

- 37.5-million-pixel CMOS (Leica S) and CCD (Leica S-E) sensors
- ISO 100-6400 (S) and 100-1600 (S-E)
- Leica S mount
- 0.8x crop factor
- Price £18,720 (S) and £12,480 (S-E)
- Not yet tested

Fujifilm X-T1

This DSLR-like is the company's most capable compact system camera yet



At a glance

- 16.3-million-pixel, APS-C-sized X-Trans CMOS II sensor
- EXR Processor II
- ISO 100-51,200 (extended)
- 2.36-million-dot OLED EVF
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot LCD
- £950 body only
- Tested: AP 15 March



THE FUJIFILM X-T1 is a high-end compact system camera with a distinctly DSLR-like design. Its body is covered in control dials for most of the major settings, including shutter speed, exposure compensation, ISO and drive mode, resulting in very intuitive operation. Many of the buttons can be customised too, while the weather-sealed, magnesium-alloy body feels reassuringly solid.

Inside the X-T1 is a 16.3-million-pixel, APS-C-sized X-Trans CMOS II sensor, which includes on-chip phase-detection pixels for fast autofocus, even at the maximum

continuous shooting speed of 8fps. The camera delivers attractive images with excellent colour rendition in a range of conditions. Noise is handled well between ISO 100 and 800, with a fine level of grain creeping in towards the higher ISO 3200 and 6400 settings.

On the back there's a tilting 3in, 1.04-million-dot LCD display, but without touchscreen functionality. The 2.36-million-dot EVF is one of the best on the market, and its 0.77x magnification exceeds most full-frame DSLRs. The X-T1 also offers Wi-Fi connectivity, allowing remote control via a dedicated smartphone/tablet app.

With the X-T1, Fujifilm has continued to improve upon what is already one of the most successful ranges on the market. The X-Trans sensor delivers fantastic results, the build quality is sublime and it really impresses in the hand. It's one of our favourite cameras of 2014.

Leica T

Leica's first step into the compact system camera sector combines minimalist design with touchscreen control

At a glance

- 16.3-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor
- 3.7in, 16:9 ratio, 1.3-million-dot touchscreen LCD
- ISO 100-12,500
- 16GB internal memory
- Adobe Photoshop Lightroom included
- £1,350 body only
- Tested: AP 7 June

THE LEICA T (Type 701) is the company's first compact system camera. Based around a new T mount, it comes with a sleek aluminium body design. There are very few physical controls – just a shutter button, a couple of control dials for changing exposure settings and a combined power/flash button. The back of the camera is mainly home to the

large 3.7in touchscreen, and this is used to change most settings via a highly customisable menu interface.

A 16.3-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor offers a sensitivity range of ISO 100-12,500. Images can be saved as JPEGs or raw files, using the universal DNG raw format, and stored either on an SD card or using the substantial 16GB of internal memory. Image quality matches some of the best 16-million-pixel DSLRs in terms of resolution, with a good level of noise control, but you need to shoot raw for best results. The camera's sleek design,



scene modes and touchscreen indicate that Leica is perhaps aiming at a younger audience than it is with its M-series cameras. Wi-Fi connectivity makes it easy to share images between the

camera and a smartphone.

Overall, we like this camera, but at around £2,600 with 18-56mm lens, it's difficult to justify buying it ahead of other premium CSCs that offer more features for less money.

Nikon 1 V3

With its 18.4-million-pixel, 1in sensor, this is the firm's most advanced system camera yet

NIKON'S compact system cameras have never quite taken off with camera enthusiasts, and the Nikon 1 V3 is the company's third attempt to tap into the top end of this market. It is based around an 18.4-million-pixel, 1in-type sensor, which does away with an optical low-pass filter for greater resolving power. The ISO range runs from 160-12,800, and Nikon's Expeed 4A image engine incorporates two processors for enhanced performance, allowing the V3 to shoot at up to 60fps at full resolution. Images are recorded to MicroSD cards.

The Nikon 1 V3 is bundled with a 10-30mm f/3.5-5.6 PD-Zoom lens that offers a 27-81mm equivalent range. It has a compact design and a power-driven zoom designed to deliver smooth transitions during movie recording.

The V3's handling is better than its predecessors, but still not as

good as its high-end CSC peers, with small fiddly buttons and sometimes unintuitive operation. The sensor is a little underwhelming, and the lack of a built-in EVF is disappointing. Its super-fast AF and 60fps are extremely impressive, and unmatched by the competition. However, with image quality that lags behind its peers and a steep asking price, it's still far from the perfect tool for enthusiast photographers looking for a smaller alternative to their DSLR.



At a glance

- 18.4-million-pixel, 1in-sized CMOS sensor
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot vari-angle touchscreen
- ISO 160-12,800
- Expeed 4A image processor
- 60fps burst shooting
- £650 with 10-30mm lens
- Tested: AP 24 May

Nikon 1 J4

This CSC delivers continuous shooting up to 20 frames per second at its full 18.4-million-pixel resolution

THE NIKON 1 J4 sits in the middle of the company's CSC range, and looks pretty impressive on paper. Improvements over the J3 include a better battery life, up to 300 shots per charge compared to 220 previously, touchscreen control, an 18.4-million-pixel CX-format sensor (14.2 million pixels in the J3) and an sensitivity range of ISO 160-12,800 (ISO 160-6400 in the J3). The J4 is available in a kit with

the compact VR 10-30mm f/3.5-5.6 PD-Zoom lens.

With an intelligent hybrid AF system and Nikon's Expeed 4A image processor, the J4 is capable of continuous autofocus during a 20fps burst mode, which is undoubtedly its most impressive feature. It can also shoot at up to 60fps with fixed focus, giving it

At a glance

- 18.4-million-pixel, CX-format CMOS sensor
- 3in 1.04-million-dot LCD
- ISO 200-12,800
- 20fps continuous focus or 60fps fixed focus
- 1080p video at 60fps with built-in stereo mic
- £330 body only
- Tested: AP 30 August

a clear edge over its peers if speed is a priority.

In keeping with its minimalistic design, there are few physical controls on the J4. We find the beginner-focused user interface frustrating for more advanced users, although the bright 3in, 1.04-million-dot touchscreen is relatively easy to use in bright sunlight and highly responsive, featuring touch AF area selection and shooting.

Image quality is a bit disappointing, with the sensor offering a limited dynamic range and overly noisy images at sensitivities above ISO 1600. However, if speed and style in a compact body are your key requirements, then there's little to rival the J4.



At a glance

- 14.2-million-pixel, CX-format CMOS sensor
- Hybrid autofocus system
- 20fps shooting
- 3in, 460,000-dot LCD screen
- £340 with 11-27.5mm f/3.5-5.6 lens
- Not yet tested

Nikon 1 S2

This may be an entry-level compact system camera, but it is still capable of ultra-fast 20fps shooting with autofocus

THE NIKON 1 S2 sits at the bottom of the company's compact system camera range. It uses a

14.2-million-pixel, CX-format imaging sensor, with an ISO 200-12,800 sensitivity range. As with the rest of the Nikon 1 series, the S2 has a sophisticated hybrid autofocus system, with 73 phase-detection points and 135 contrast-detection points. However, it's the continuous shooting speed that really stands out, with the S2's Expeed 4A dual-engine image processor enabling 20 frames per second with autofocus and a buffer of 10 raw images. Nikon has designed the

camera for people wanting to make the step up from smartphones and compact cameras, but who aren't necessarily interested in learning too many technical details about photography. The S2 is pitched more as a family camera than anything else, and this is reinforced by the black, red, white and yellow colour options on offer. It comes in a kit with an 11-27.5mm f/3.5-5.6 lens, priced at around £340, while an outfit that adds a 30-110mm zoom costs around £460.

Like the Nikon 1 J4, the S2's entry-level positioning means that it offers a control interface that's designed to be accessible to beginners, but which enthusiast photographers may probably find frustrating. Its autofocus and continuous shooting prowess are very impressive, but we think most photographers will be happier with one of its larger-sensored competitors.



Pentax Q-S1

This model is one of the smallest interchangeable-lens cameras on the market, but with a 12.4-million-pixel sensor and ISO up to 12,800

At a glance

- 12.4-million-pixel, 1/1.7in backlit CMOS sensor
- 3in, 460,000-dot LCD screen with AR coating
- In-body image-stabilisation system
- Pentax Q mount
- In-camera raw processing and HDR mode
- £280 body only
- Tested: AP 1 November

THE LATEST Q-series model from Pentax is one of the smallest interchangeable-lens cameras that money can buy, measuring 105 x 58 x 34mm and weighing just 200g (with battery and card). This latest version features a 12.4-million-pixel, 1/1.7in backlit CMOS sensor and Pentax Q engine image processor, capable of 5fps

bursts, raw and JPEG shooting, and sensitivity up to ISO 12,800. It sports a tough plastic frame and aluminium grip.

On paper, the Q-S1 is almost identical to the Q7, although a makeover gives it a more refined look. Aluminium is also featured on the camera's quick dial and the positioning of its controls make it easy to use. The Q-S1 can record full HD video at 30fps, has full manual control, and more than 20 scene and exposure preset modes for capturing stills. The Q-S1's ultimate selling point

is its compact size. However, its sensor size is a limiting factor for capturing high-quality images. Smartphones with 1/2.3in sensors,



like the Sony Xperia Z3, capture comparable images, although of course, most phones don't shoot raw, don't have interchangeable lenses and lack the well-placed controls of the Pentax Q-S1.

Olympus OM-D E-M10

The follow-up to the award-winning **OM-D E-M1** and **OM-D E-M5** is a more affordable offering that retains the same quality construction and classic design

OLYMPUS has won many fans since reverting to the classic film SLR design aesthetic for its OM-D cameras. The E-M10 continues in the same vein, being an attractive lightweight alternative to tempt advanced enthusiasts who don't want bulkier and heavier DSLRs. The E-M10 has a 16.1-million-pixel, four thirds sensor, and uses the popular micro four thirds mount, giving compatibility with a wide range of lenses. An in-body image-stabilisation system works with practically all these lenses.

The E-M10 has a 1.44-million-dot electronic viewfinder, and is the first OM-D camera to include a built-in flash, which is nestled below a hotshoe that can be used to attach an external flash. A tilting 3in, 1.04-million-dot LCD touchscreen, three-axis image stabilisation, twin control dials, focus peaking and wireless capabilities complete a

comprehensive feature set. The camera is sold with a slimline 14-42mm f/3.5-5.6 power zoom lens (around £660) that's a good match for its compact body size.

With responsive handling and highly customisable controls, the E-M10 delivers excellent image quality. Its JPEGs are particularly attractive straight out of the camera, with warm, punchy colours, although for best results we recommend turning down the noise filter and sharpening a little. Overall, the E-M10 is capable of matching similarly priced DSLRs, and its compact size means

you can take it everywhere with you so you'll get shots that you might not with a DSLR.



At a glance

- 16.1-million-pixel, four thirds-sized Live MOS sensor
- ISO 200-25,600
- 8fps shooting
- Wi-Fi control and transfer from smart device
- 1.44-million-dot EVF
- 3-axis image stabilisation
- £500 body only
- Tested: AP 22 March

Olympus Pen E-PL7

Pen on the outside, **OM-D** on the inside – and capable of delivering excellent results

THE OLYMPUS Pen E-PL7 may not look much like the OM-D E-M10 on the outside, but internally it's pretty much exactly the same camera. The E-PL7 lacks a built-in electronic viewfinder and flash, and only has a single control dial, but this makes it smaller and more portable – and

significantly cheaper. A small flash unit is provided in the box, and the camera can accept an optional electronic viewfinder. The articulated screen can be rotated downwards to face forward underneath the camera for arm's-length selfies, and built-in Wi-Fi allows image sharing and remote control of the camera from a smartphone. Olympus is very

At a glance

- 16.1-million-pixel, four thirds-sized Live MOS sensor
- ISO 200-25,600
- 8 frames per second shooting
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot tiltable LCD
- 3-axis image stabilisation
- £350 body only
- Tested: AP 22 November

conspicuously marketing the E-PL7 at young women, based on research that suggests male enthusiast photographers tend to prefer cameras with viewfinders like the E-M10. This fact is reinforced by the E-PL7's very attractive, if perhaps a little self-conscious, styling. The camera can be bought either body-only for around £350, or with a compact 14-42mm f/3.5-5.6 EZ lens for around £500, in a choice of silver, white or black.

The E-PL7 shares almost all the features we like about the E-M10, including its super-fast autofocus, excellent build quality and effective in-body image stabilisation system. Most importantly, it's capable of producing very attractive images that rival those from much larger DSLRs.



Panasonic Lumix DMC-GH4

The first model to make 4K video affordable to enthusiast photographers

At a glance

- 16.05-million-pixel, four thirds Live MOS sensor
- Venus Engine IX
- ISO 100-25,600 (extended)
- 4K video recording
- 2.36-million-dot OLED EVF
- £1,200 body only or £1,650 with 14-140mm f/3.5-5.6 lens
- Tested: AP 24 May

PANASONIC'S GH-series models have always been strongly video-focused, and the fourth iteration in the shape of the Lumix DMC-GH4 emphasises this by being the first compact system camera to include 4K video recording. However, with its revised 16.05-million-pixel, four thirds sensor and DSLR-like styling and control layout, it's an excellent camera for stills photography too.

The GH4 is capable of 7.5 frames per second shooting with continuous AF and as fast as 12fps

with focus fixed, for 40 raw images or 100 JPEGs at full resolution. Autofocus is exceptionally quick, aided by Panasonic's proprietary Depth from Defocus technology.

The GH4 features a 2.36-million-dot OLED EVF, similar in size to the optical viewfinders of full-frame DSLRs, with 100% coverage. It is complemented by a 3in, 1.04-million-dot touchscreen, which is fully articulated rather than tilt-only like those on most of its competitors. The weather-resistant body is peppered with external controls, which offer a high level of customisation.

The GH4's standout feature may well be its professional-quality video recording, but it's no slouch as a stills camera. Auto white balance has a tendency to err towards the cool side, and the 16.05-million-pixel resolution perhaps looks a little lacking in the face of 24-million-pixel competitors, but overall image quality is very good. Previously, the GH series has been



a big hit with videographers, but now Panasonic has created a camera that photographers will be wise to pay attention to as well.



Panasonic Lumix DMC-GM5

The smallest interchangeable-lens camera on the market with a built-in electronic viewfinder

At a glance

- 16-million-pixel, four thirds Live MOS sensor
- 98.5 x 59.5 x 36.1mm size
- ISO 100-25,600 (extended)
- 1.17-million-dot EVF
- 3in, 921,000-dot touchscreen
- £770 with 12-32mm f/3.5-5.6 lens
- Tested: AP 15 November

PANASONIC'S tiny Lumix DMC-GM1 was one of our favourite cameras of last year, and the company has followed it up this year with the GM5, which adds an electronic viewfinder in a body that is only slightly larger than the previous model. Aside from that, the GM5 gains a hotshoe in lieu of a built-in flash, and features a revised control layout.

With its 16-million pixel, Live MOS sensor and micro four thirds lens mount, the GM5 offers decent image quality and access to a large

range of lenses. Autofocus is excellent – both extremely fast and very accurate – which makes the camera great for grabbing quick shots. Yet while it's the smallest interchangeable-lens camera on the market with a built-in EVF, this does come with some practical disadvantages. The viewfinder is small compared to its peers, the controls are small and somewhat cramped, and the battery life is rather brief too.

In short, the GM5 offers a trade-off between size and usability. If a compact model is crucial to you, then it's a winner – it would be hard to find another camera that can match its speed and image quality and still fit inside a top pocket. However, using the camera isn't quite as pleasant an experience as it is with larger competitors.



Samsung NX30

An unusual tilting EVF makes its debut on this 20.3-million-pixel, DSLR-styled model



At a glance

- 20.3-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor
- ISO 100-25,600
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot tiltable Super AMOLED swivel touchscreen LCD
- 2.4-million-dot electronic viewfinder with 80° tiltable eyepiece
- NFC and Wi-Fi connectivity
- E570 with 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 kit lens
- Tested: AP 29 March

THE SAMSUNG NX30 is a DSLR-styled CSC, based around a 20.3-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor, which is the same as that used in previous Samsung cameras. With its DRiMe IV processor, it allows continuous shooting at 9fps. Externally, the NX30's standout feature is its unusual tilting electronic viewfinder, which can be rotated 80° upwards for shooting at awkward angles. The rear 3in Super AMOLED screen is also fully articulated, so it can be set

to face upwards, downwards or even forwards. Both displays are of excellent quality.

With Wi-Fi and NFC connectivity, the NX30 can connect to a smart device for remote control and image sharing. It can also connect to the internet from a Wi-Fi hotspot without the aid of another device, and upload pictures directly to sites like Facebook and Dropbox.

The camera's build quality feels rather plasticky, and it's a little slow to process files while shooting. On the other hand, its controls are well laid out and easy to use, and many can be changed using the on-screen Function menu. The camera's metering is accurate and autofocus is snappy. Image quality is very good at low ISOs, although it visibly deteriorates at higher sensitivities, with strong noise-reduction effects visible in JPEGs at ISO 800 and higher. However, if low-light performance at high ISO sensitivity isn't imperative, the NX30 will do a fantastic job.

Samsung NX1

Breathtaking performance is promised from the firm's top-end compact system camera

At a glance

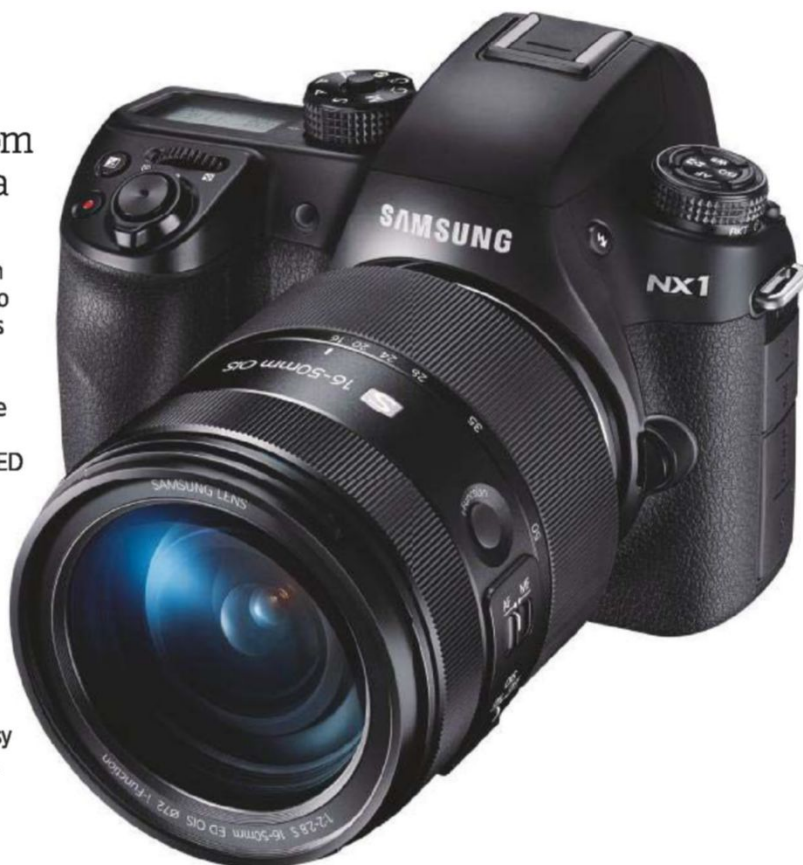
- 28-million-pixel, APS-C-sized BSI CMOS sensor
- 15fps continuous shooting
- 4K video recording
- ISO 100-51,200 (extended)
- £1,300 body only
- Not yet tested

ONE OF the stars of Photokina 2014 was Samsung's NX1. It is the company's latest top-end compact system camera and features an extraordinary specification, including a 28-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor with a hybrid autofocus system that includes phase-detection elements arrayed across almost the entire frame. This is the first APS-C sensor to use backside illumination technology, promising improved image quality at high sensitivities right up to the maximum of ISO 51,200. The NX1 can shoot at

15 frames per second with continuous autofocus, and with a 70-frame JPEG buffer. It also joins a select group of cameras that offer video recording at 4K resolution.

The NX1 incorporates a large 2.36-million-dot electronic viewfinder, a 3in Super AMOLED tilting touchscreen and even a top-plate LCD panel of the type normally reserved for enthusiast DSLRs. The camera's body is made of magnesium alloy, and is dustproof and splashproof. Naturally, Wi-Fi with NFC is built-in, but Samsung has also added Bluetooth to enable easy set-up with a range of devices. The camera's DRiMe V multi-core processor is faster and more power-efficient than previous versions, which helps to extend the battery life to 500 shots per charge.

On paper, the NX1 is a startlingly



impressive camera, and one that looks worthy of serious attention. It may just be the model to finally

convince photographers of Samsung's credentials as a serious camera maker.

Samsung NX3000

Retro-styling and great value combine for casual photographers

SAMSUNG'S NX3000 is an entry-level compact system camera designed for novice photographers. It comes with a decent specification, including a 20.3-million-pixel, APS-C-sized

CMOS sensor offering a sensitivity range of ISO 100-25,600, and a hinged 3in LCD that can be tilted upwards and fully forwards for selfies. However, at 460,000 dots, the LCD has a low resolution by

current standards. Built-in Wi-Fi allows easy image sharing to smartphones.

The NX3000 can shoot at up to 5fps, saving images to a MicroSD card rather than the commonly used SD format. The bundled 16-50mm f/3.5-5.6 PZ lens is nice and compact, and includes

Samsung's useful i-Function button that can be used to quickly change settings such as ISO, white balance and exposure compensation. There is no built-in flash, but a small external one is included in the box.

With its attractive retro styling, the NX3000 handles quite well, although it's disappointingly slow at writing raw files. The lack of a touchscreen is also a step back from its predecessor, the NX2000. The autofocus works well in good light, but can struggle in low-light conditions. The metering is

At a glance

- 20.3-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor
- ISO 100-25,600
- 3in, 460,000-dot tilting LCD screen
- Compatible with Samsung NX lenses
- £230 with 16-50mm lens
- Tested: AP 9 August

extremely protective of highlight detail, which in practice can mean backlit shots coming out too dark. Detail reproduction is very good up to ISO 800, but suffers at higher sensitivities due to aggressive noise reduction.

The NX3000 isn't really a camera for enthusiast photographers, who would be better served by the NX300. As a casual point-and-shoot model, though, it would be a good camera for capturing family moments and sharing images across social media. At just £230 with lens, it also offers exceptional value for money.



Samsung NX mini

This CSC is claimed to be the world's smallest and lightest interchangeable-lens camera

At a glance

- 20.5-million-pixel 1in CMOS sensor
- ISO 100-12,800 (extended)
- 3in, 460,800-dot tilting touchscreen
- Takes Samsung NX-M lenses
- £270 with 9mm lens
- Tested: AP 31 May

WITH A 20.5-million-pixel, 1in sensor, the NX mini is designed as a small, simple interchangeable-lens camera in a similar fashion to the Nikon 1 S2. Only three lenses are available to fit the NX mini's new NX-M mount – a 9-27mm f/3.5-5.6 zoom (24-70mm equivalent), 9mm f/3.5 wideangle prime (24mm equivalent) and 17mm f/1.8 standard prime (46mm equivalent). NX-mount lenses can be used with an optional adapter.

Viewing is via a 3in, 460,800-dot tilting touchscreen, which can be hinged upwards to face forwards, putting the camera

into selfie mode (complete with wink and smile shot shutter trigger modes). Built-in Wi-Fi with NFC allow connection to a smartphone for image sharing, and it's also possible to upload files directly from the camera to sites like Facebook and Flickr. Used with a smartphone on the same Wi-Fi network, the NX mini can even be used as a baby monitor.

With the 9mm wideangle lens mounted, the camera is easily pocketable, but the zoom lens makes it rather bulkier. Some of the buttons are poorly placed, with the video button in particular being too easy to press accidentally. The metering is reliable and autofocus is fast, but we found it had a bad

habit of occasionally losing focus immediately before taking a shot. Image quality is perfectly acceptable up to about ISO 3200, but the auto white balance

tends to be overly warm.

The NX mini is a very neat, small package that should do a good job for day trips, holidays, nights out and family fun.



Sony Alpha 5000 and 5100

The 5000-series cameras offer performance that belies their compact size

THE ALPHA 5000 and 5100 twins are small cameras that pack a powerful punch. Externally, they're almost indistinguishable, but the newer Alpha 5100 gains significant updates inside. For one, the Alpha 5000 has a 20.1-million-pixel sensor, while the Alpha 5100 borrows the excellent 24.3-million-pixel unit from the Alpha 6000, complete with its sophisticated

on-chip hybrid AF system with 179 points across 84% of the frame.

Both cameras have lightweight plastic bodies, identical control layouts, and a 3in tilting screen that can face forwards for self-portraits. However, the Alpha 5100's display is both higher resolution and touch-sensitive, allowing focusing and shutter release by tapping the screen. The Alpha 5100 also has

the ability to simultaneously record full HD video footage alongside a 720p MP4 file for easy sharing.

The Alpha 5100's autofocus is especially impressive, being essentially the same as the Alpha 6000's, although the Alpha 5000's is still perfectly respectable. Both cameras also give very good image quality,

producing excellent results up to ISO 3200, if perhaps with overly aggressive noise reduction at times.

As small, take-everywhere cameras for casual use, these two models are difficult to beat. The Alpha 5000 is exceptional value, at £300 with a 16-50mm zoom.

The Alpha 5100 is rather more expensive, but gives truly remarkable performance for a camera of its size.

At a glance

Alpha 5000

- 20.1-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor
- 3in, 460,000-dot tilting LCD screen
- £300 with 16-50mm zoom
- Tested: AP 22 February



Alpha 5100

- 24.3-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor
- 3in, 921,600-dot tilting touchscreen LCD
- £530 with 16-50mm zoom
- Tested: AP 27 September



Sony Alpha 6000

A comprehensive specification makes this one of the very best compact system cameras on the market



THE ALPHA 6000 is a fully featured compact system camera for enthusiast photographers. It uses a 24.3-million-pixel,

APS-C-sized Exmor CMOS sensor alongside Sony's latest Bionz X image processor. The sensor has phase-detection elements across most of its area, resulting in a fast hybrid AF system that uses 25 contrast-detect and 179 phase-detect points. The Alpha 6000 can shoot at 11fps for up to 49 frames in JPEG, or 21 frames when shooting raw + JPEG. A sensitivity range of ISO 100-25,600 is on offer, or ISO 100-12,800 in movie mode.

For viewing, the Alpha 6000 features a 1.44-million-dot EVF that, with its 0.7x magnification, is as large as the viewfinders of full-frame DSLRs. On the back there's a tilting 3in, 921,600-dot LCD display, although unlike on many of its competitors this isn't touch-sensitive. Wi-Fi and

At a glance

- 24.3-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor
- ISO 100-25,600
- 1.44-million-dot EVF
- 3in, 921,600-dot tilting LCD
- 1920 x 1080p full HD video at 60/24fps
- £530 with 16-50mm lens
- Tested: AP 3 May

NFC connectivity are built in.

The camera feels nicely balanced and comfortable in the hand, and the controls are easy to access and operate while shooting with the viewfinder. The metering gives consistently well-judged exposures, and the autofocus is fast and accurate, and fully capable of tracking fast-moving subjects during continuous shooting. Image quality is excellent, with high levels of detail at low ISO and good noise management up to ISO 6400 at least.

With its exceptional AF, fast burst shooting and excellent image quality, the Alpha 6000 is one of the most impressive compact system cameras around. Indeed, it's hard to pick out any substantial flaw.

Sony Alpha 7S

This 12.2-million-pixel, full-frame compact system camera is a low-light specialist



At a glance

- 12.2-million-pixel, full-frame Exmor CMOS sensor
- ISO 50-409,600
- 3in, 921,600-dot tilting LCD
- 2.36-million-dot OLED EVF
- 5fps continuous shooting
- £2,050 body only
- Tested: AP 26 July



THE ALPHA 7S is the third model in Sony's series of full-frame compact system cameras. Sharing the same external design as the older Alpha 7 and Alpha 7R, the Alpha 7S differs primarily in its sensor, which is a 12.2-million-pixel CMOS unit. The relatively low resolution compared to its 24.3-million-pixel (Alpha 7) and 36.4-million-pixel (Alpha 7R) siblings brings two primary advantages: extraordinary low-light performance, with an ISO 409,600 setting on offer; and the ability to record 4K video (although only via an external recorder).

The Alpha 7S uses the same tough magnesium-alloy body shell as the Alpha 7R, with dust and

weather-sealing. The control layout is identical too, being based around two top-plate dials and a rear scroll wheel that works perfectly well. One major addition, though, is a completely silent electronic shutter option, which allows for extremely discreet shooting.

Autofocus isn't exactly slow, but neither is it lightning-fast like many other top CSCs. Continuous shooting runs at up to 5fps, dropping to 2.5fps with continuous AF. The 12.2-million-pixel sensor obviously doesn't resolve as much detail as its peers, but it makes up for this with exceptional control of noise, with sensitivities as high as ISO 25,600 perfectly usable.

The Alpha 7S is something of a niche product – it's really aimed at videographers who need 4K capability – but with its remarkable high ISO image quality, it caters well for anyone looking for superb low-light performance in a small full-frame camera.

Sony QX1

A CSC that is controlled via a smartphone and compatible with E-mount lenses

SONY has probably been the most consistently innovative camera company of the past few years, constantly trying to find new niches for its products, but the QX1 may well be its most idiosyncratic camera yet.

The QX1 is an evolution of Sony's 'lens-style camera' concept, only now without a lens. Instead, it has a 20.1-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor, and a Sony E mount to accept interchangeable lenses. There's no rear screen, and only minimal physical controls. Instead, the camera is designed to be controlled from a smart device over Wi-Fi, using the Sony PlayMemories Mobile app. This offers a decent level of manual control, including the ability to set aperture, ISO and exposure compensation. Set-up is made easier by the inclusion of NFC.

Images are recorded to a MicroSD card housed in the camera, and can be saved as both

JPEG and raw files. There's a tiny little pop-up flash for extra lighting when it's needed, and the NP-FW50 battery is charged internally using USB.

The QX1 is essentially the Alpha



At a glance

- 20.1-million-pixel, APS-C Exmor CMOS sensor
- ISO 100-16,000
- Records JPEG and raw
- Uses Sony PlayMemories Mobile app
- £250 body only
- Not yet tested

5000 with the screen and controls removed, and offers the same image quality, which is no bad thing. It can also accept a wide range of third-party lenses via adapters, aside from any of Sony's E-mount

lens range. It's a really interesting idea, but with the Alpha 5000 currently selling for only a little more money with a lens included, it's difficult to see exactly who, or what, it's for.

Canon PowerShot G1 X Mark II

An enthusiast compact with a large sensor and 5x zoom lens

THE POWERSHOT G1 X Mark II is an update of the two-year-old G1 X, using the same 1.5in-type sensor, but with a new 24-120mm (equivalent) lens with a very respectable maximum aperture of f/2-3.9. This offers a much-improved minimum focusing distance of 5cm, too.

The G1 X Mark II drops the optical viewfinder found in its predecessor, although it can accept an accessory electronic finder. The screen is now tilt-only, rather than fully articulated, but it is touch-sensitive. Build quality is sturdy and robust, and a new handgrip transforms the handling. Two customisable control rings encircle the lens, allowing control of exposure settings.

Metering tends to err on the side of giving bright images, so it often needs to be toned down with a touch of exposure compensation. This is aided by the live histogram, which can be displayed alongside a virtual horizon display that helps

keeps shots straight.

Focusing speed is reasonably quick, although not as fast as some competitors. Manual focus is aided by a new peaking display. Image quality is pretty good, with accurate white balance and colour, decent dynamic range and good noise control up to ISO 1600. Unfortunately, battery life is relatively poor. The Canon G1 X Mark II is a better camera than its predecessor, but given its size and lack of viewfinder, we think better options are available.



Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
★★★★

At a glance

- 13.1-million-pixel CMOS sensor
- 24-120mm (equivalent) f/2-3.9 lens
- ISO 100-12,800
- Digic 6 image-processing engine
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot tilting touchscreen
- £649
- Tested: AP 31 May

Canon PowerShot G7 X

The first serious competition to Sony's RX100 series of advanced compact cameras arrives

At a glance

- 20.2-million-pixel, 1in CMOS sensor
- Digic 6 processor
- 24-100mm (equivalent) f/1.8-2.8 lens
- ISO 125-12,800
- 3-in, 1.04-million-dot tilting touchscreen
- £580
- Tested: AP 1 November

THE CANON PowerShot G7 X is a compact camera for enthusiast photographers that features a 20.2-million-pixel, 1in sensor, which sits behind an ultra-fast 24-100mm (equivalent) f/1.8-2.8 zoom lens. As such, it's not only very stiff competition for the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 III, but it also makes Canon's own PowerShot G1 X Mark II look a little outdated.

With an exposure-compensation dial underneath the mode dial, and a customisable control ring around

the lens that gives firm clicks when settings are changed, the G7 X's control layout is well considered for stills photographers. The tilting rear touchscreen allows the focus point to be specified by tapping the screen, and is particularly useful for changing settings during movie recording. Other features include a built-in ND filter and 5cm closest focus. One weakness, though, is a relatively small battery, which is rated for a relatively meagre 200 shots per charge.

The PowerShot G7 X is a well-made little camera and very pleasant to shoot with. Image quality is excellent, with lots of detail and excellent noise control up to ISO 1600. Images are quite usable at higher ISOs with careful processing too, although we'd avoid ISO 12,800 if possible.

With its extremely useful lens



Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
Recommended
★★★★

range and well-thought-out control layout, the G7 X is a really impressive pocket camera for enthusiast photographers.

However, anyone who is also serious about movie-making may be better served by the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 III.

Canon PowerShot SX60 HS

A superzoom bridge camera with a 21-1,365mm equivalent range and DSLR-like controls

At a glance

- 16.1-million-pixel, 1/2.3in BSI CMOS sensor
- 21-1,365mm (equivalent) f/3.4-6.5 lens
- ISO 100-3200
- 3in, 922,000-dot vari-angle LCD
- 1920 x 1080-pixel video at 60fps or 30fps
- £450
- Tested: AP 15 November

THE CANON PowerShot SX60 HS is the successor to last year's SX50 HS and is distinguished by its vast 65x optical zoom, which is as notable for its 21mm-equivalent wideangle setting as it is for its 1,365mm (equivalent) telephoto. The SX60 HS uses a 16.1-million-pixel, 1/2.3in back-illuminated CMOS sensor and Canon's latest Digic 6 processor, and offers a maximum sensitivity of ISO 3200. Most notably, though, the camera offers raw-format recording, which is unusual in this class.

However, that super-long lens isn't entirely practical in reality, as it's difficult to use handheld, despite the addition of a couple of framing-assist buttons on the barrel. The SX60 HS feels nice enough in the hand, though, and all the controls are large and well spaced. The viewfinder and LCD are both pretty good, but there is no eye sensor to switch between them automatically, which is really frustrating.

The camera's biggest problem is autofocus speed – it's fine in good light, but becomes increasingly hesitant as light levels fall, especially at the long end of the zoom. Image quality is perfectly acceptable up to ISO 400, but higher sensitivities show increasing loss of detail, especially in the shadows.

Overall, the SX60 HS is a perfectly capable performer in



Amateur Photographer Testbench
★★★★

undemanding conditions, and its extraordinary zoom range covers almost every conceivable subject. In more demanding shooting situations, though, it quickly shows its limitations.

Fujifilm X30

This has possibly the best built-in EVF of any compact, plus a mechanical zoom ring



THE FUJIFILM X30 is a premium compact camera for enthusiast photographers. It stands out from the crowd for its use of a mechanical zoom ring to operate its 28-112mm (equivalent) f/2-2.8 lens. It also has probably the best built-in electronic viewfinder of any zoom compact camera – a

2.36-million-dot OLED unit with 0.65x magnification.

Images are recorded using Fujifilm's 12-million-pixel, X-Trans CMOS II sensor, which is of the 2/3in type, meaning it's a little smaller than those in other recent premium compacts.

Aside from its zoom ring, the X30 has plenty of other external controls, including an exposure-compensation dial and an

At a glance

- 12-million-pixel, 2/3in X-Trans CMOS II sensor
- 28-112mm (equivalent) f/2-2.8 lens
- 2.36-million-dot OLED EVF
- 3in, 920,000-dot tilting LCD
- 12fps continuous shooting
- £480
- Tested: AP 8 November

additional control dial around the lens behind the zoom ring. A 3in, 920,000-dot tilting screen on the back aids shooting at unusual angles, and the camera has built-in Wi-Fi for remote control and image-sharing using a smartphone.

The X30 is a very well-built camera, with extremely fast autofocus and impressive 12fps shooting. It produces excellent images with attractive colour rendition at lower sensitivities, but can't quite match its larger-sensored peers in low light. Its 28mm (equivalent) wideangle lens is also a little limited compared to its competitors. Overall, though, the X30 is still one of the best premium compacts on the market, especially for photographers who prefer to shoot with the camera to their eye as opposed to using an LCD.

Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended
★★★★

Fujifilm X100T

The third-generation **X100**-series model brings an array of handling improvements

THE FUJIFILM X100T is a fixed-lens premium compact that hides bang up-to-date technology within its distinctly retro-styled body. It retains the key imaging components of its predecessor,

the X100S, including the tried-and-tested 16.3-million-pixel, X-Trans CMOS II sensor, Fujinon 23mm f/2 lens and EXR Processor

II. The main changes are an updated viewfinder and a raft of usability improvements.

The X100T adds an 'electronic rangefinder' view to the unique optical/electronic hybrid viewfinder. This blanks off the lower-right corner of the optical viewfinder, and projects into it a magnified EVF display of the subject for precise focusing. The area of interest can even be moved around the frame to cover off-centre subjects. The controls have been improved compared to the X100S, with the aperture ring now working in 1/3-stop increments rather than whole stops, and the exposure-

compensation dial gaining an expanded range of $\pm 3\text{EV}$. The LCD has been updated to a 3in, 1.04-million-dot panel, a new electronic shutter offers speeds up to a staggering 1/32,000sec, and movie mode gains more manual exposure controls and frame-rate options. Built-in Wi-Fi allows connection to a mobile device, for both easy image sharing and remote control.

Overall, the X100T is very desirable indeed – a hugely enjoyable camera to use that delivers excellent results.

At a glance

- 16.3-million-pixel, APS-C X-Trans CMOS II sensor
- 35mm (equivalent) f/2 lens
- ISO 100-51,200 (extended)
- 6fps continuous shooting
- 3in, 1.04-million-dot LCD screen
- £1,000
- Tested: AP 29 November



Leica X

An evolution of the two-year-old **X2** delivers a much faster f/1.7 lens

At a glance

- 16.2-million-pixel, APS-C CMOS sensor
- ISO 100-12,500
- 5fps continuous shooting
- 2.4-million-dot clip-on EVF (available separately, priced £400)
- £1,550
- Not yet tested

THE LEICA X (Type 113) is the manufacturer's latest flagship fixed-lens compact. It sits above the newly announced X-E, which is a cosmetically refreshed version of the two-year-old Leica X2. The X has a fixed Summilux 23mm f/1.7 Asph optic (equivalent to 35mm), which is 1 1/2 stops faster than the X2's. The lens has a dedicated manual-focus ring, which is also used to turn the camera to AF mode by twisting it past the infinity position.

The APS-C-sized CMOS sensor

gives an effective resolution of 16.2 million pixels, and supports an ISO range of 100-12,500. The 3in screen has a 921,000-dot

resolution, and the X can also accept the optional 2.4-million-dot T Visoflex clip-on viewfinder.

Other features include a shutter speed range of 30-1/2000sec, raw + JPEG support, continuous shooting at 5fps for up to seven shots, and the use of Leica's BP-DC8 rechargeable lithium battery, which is claimed to have a charge of up to 350 shots.

As expected from the Leica

brand and from a compact with an asking price of £1,550, the build quality and finish of the X are sublime. However, it's quite a bulky camera, being noticeably larger all round than the X2, and with a much larger lens barrel than its closest competitor, the Fujifilm X100T. We'd probably choose the clean, two-tone finish of the silver X over the all-black version shown here.



Panasonic Lumix DMC-CM1

Is it a phone or is it an enthusiast pocket camera? This promises to be both

THE LUMIX DMC-CM1 sees a resurgent Panasonic producing a product that defies simple categorisation. Essentially, it's a camera phone, but one where far more attention has been paid to camera design, usability and image quality than ever before.

From the back, the CM1 looks just like a smartphone, with a large touchscreen and three-button set typical of an Android device. From the front, though, it's clear that this is something different in camera terms, with a prominent lens surrounded by a control dial that's used to change camera settings. In fact, the CM1 uses the same 1in-type backlit CMOS sensor as several current enthusiast compacts, and a 28mm (equivalent)



At a glance

- 20.1-million-pixel, 1in backlit CMOS sensor
- 28mm (equivalent) f/2.8 lens
- 4.7in full HD (1920 x 1080-pixel) touchscreen
- 4K video recording
- €800 (around £625)
- Not yet tested

f/2.8 Leica Elmarit lens.

The CM1's camera interface is identical to that used on the company's premium compact cameras, and completely separate from Android. The camera is activated by a sliding switch on top, which is also used to enter playback mode. Naturally, the CM1 has a dedicated shutter button on the top plate, and as the icing on the cake, it also records 4K video.

It is currently unclear when the CM1 will reach the UK, if indeed at all. However, our first impressions are that it has the potential to be the ideal mobile device for the enthusiast photographer.

Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ60



At a glance

- 18.1-million-pixel, 1/2.3in BSI CMOS sensor
- 24-720mm (equivalent) f/3.3-6.4 lens
- 3in, 920,000-dot LCD screen
- 200,000-dot EVF
- 10fps shooting
- £300
- Tested: AP 22 March



With a 30x zoom and built-in EVF, this is probably the best 'travel zoom' yet

PANASONIC'S TZ 'travel zoom' pocket cameras have long been favourites of casual photographers, but the Lumix DMC-TZ60 adds several features that make it of greater interest to enthusiast

photographers. Most importantly, it gains a built-in electronic viewfinder, a control ring around the lens and raw-format recording.

The TZ60's Leica-branded zoom offers a 24-720mm (equivalent) range, which should cover most eventualities. Less impressive is its f/3.3-6.4 maximum aperture, but this is a necessary compromise for the camera's compact size. The 18.1-million-pixel sensor is small, being of

the 1/2.3in type, but it still offers an ISO range of 100-3200 (extended to ISO 6400) and 10fps continuous shooting. Naturally, NFC and Wi-Fi functionality are included.

The body has a more premium feel than previous TZ models, and the camera offers plenty of manual control for enthusiast photographers. The viewfinder is quite small and low in resolution, but the rear LCD is pretty good even in bright light. Autofocus is snappy towards the wide end of the zoom, but becomes less decisive at the long end. Metering is generally accurate, and image quality is quite acceptable at lower ISO sensitivities, given the small sensor. However, softness and detail loss are increasingly obvious above ISO 400.

Overall, the TZ60 feels like a far more 'serious' camera than its predecessors, and for the casual photographer or the amateur enthusiast looking to travel light, it is a very versatile choice.

Panasonic Lumix DMC-LX100

An advanced compact with analogue control dials, a fast lens and excellent image quality



At a glance

- 12.8-million-pixel, four thirds sensor
- 24-75mm (equivalent) f/1.7-2.8 lens
- ISO 100-25,600 (extended)
- Built-in EVF
- 3in, 921,000-dot LCD screen
- £700
- Tested: AP 8 November

PANASONIC'S LX range of enthusiast compacts has always been popular, but the Lumix DMC-LX100 promises to move it into an altogether different league. It places a 24-75mm (equivalent) lens with a fast f/1.7-2.8

aperture in front of a four thirds sensor with an effective resolution of 12.8 million pixels. A clever multi-aspect-ratio design means that the diagonal angle of view is maintained across the 16:9, 3:2 and 4:3 image formats, which are accessed by a switch on the lens barrel.

The LX100 features analogue control dials for aperture, shutter

speed and exposure compensation, and the ring around the lens can be used for manual focus or customised to control another function. It has a built-in 1280 x 720-pixel EVF, but this is a little too contrasty and saturated to give a really accurate preview of the scene. However, the rear LCD provides a much more realistic preview.

The autofocus and image stabilisation systems work exceptionally well, and thanks to its larger-than-average sensor, the LX100 produces excellent image quality at ISO sensitivities up to 1600 at least. Colour rendition is improved from previous Panasonic models, but the lens can be prone to purple flare in backlit conditions.

The LX100 is one of the most engaging enthusiast compacts on the market, although it's not as portable as some of its rivals and certainly won't slip into a shirt pocket. However, users will appreciate its excellent image quality and intuitive operation.

Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ1000

This bridge camera's 1in sensor and 16x zoom place it firmly at the top of its class

At a glance

- 20.1-million-pixel, 1in BSI CMOS sensor
- 25-400mm (equivalent) f/2.8-4 lens
- 3in, 921,000-dot fully articulated LCD screen
- 2.36-million-dot EVF
- 4K video recording
- £750
- Tested: AP 8 November

THE LUMIX DMC-FZ1000 is arguably the best bridge-type camera yet made, with only Sony's Cyber-shot DSC-RX10 offering serious competition. The inclusion of a 1in, 20.1-million-pixel BSI CMOS sensor and impressive 16x 25-400mm (equivalent) optical zoom lens puts it a cut above most other bridge cameras. The Leica DC optic is nice and bright (f/2.8-4), and offers fast and snappy autofocus.

The camera's built-in OLED EVF is superb, offering a 2.36-million-dot resolution. The fully articulated

921,000-dot LCD is also excellent, although unfortunately it lacks touch functionality. Build quality is pretty good, with a metal lens barrel and plastic body. Image quality is class-leading, with detail and noise handled well up to ISO 1600, beyond which JPEGs deteriorate due to noise reduction.

The FZ1000's headline feature is the inclusion of 4K video, which is four times the resolution of full HD. It's possible to grab 8-million-pixel stills from video footage, a process made easier by using the 4K Photo feature added in a recent firmware update.

The FZ1000 is quite a large

camera, being essentially the same size as an entry-level DSLR, but this does offer plenty of space for a comprehensive set of external controls.

The FZ1000 is up there as one of the best and most enjoyable bridge cameras to use, and will appeal to most hobbyists.



Sigma dp1 and dp2 Quattro

With an unconventional design and a Foveon sensor, these two differ only in their lenses

At a glance

- 19.6-million-pixel, APS-C-sized Foveon X3 Quattro sensor
- 45mm (equivalent) f/2.8 lens (dp2 Quattro)
- 28mm (equivalent) f/2.8 lens (dp1 Quattro)
- 3in, 920,000-dot screen
- ISO 100-6400
- £750
- Tested: AP16 August (dp2)

SIGMA'S latest enthusiast compact cameras are odd-shaped devices that house a radically reworked Foveon sensor in a strikingly unconventional body design. The only difference between the two is the lens – the dp2 Quattro has a 30mm f/2.8 optic giving a 45mm equivalent angle of view, while the newer dp1's 19mm f/2.8 lens gives a 28mm equivalent wideangle view.

The two share the same physical design, using a wide, low, slim body,

with the lens offset towards the right. The most striking feature is the handgrip, which is an odd-looking affair that sticks out at an angle from the back of the camera. It's not obviously better – or, for that matter, much worse – than more conventional designs, but it does add bulk. Thankfully, the control layout is much improved on previous Sigma cameras, as is the autofocus speed.

Low ISO image quality is spectacular, due to the camera's multi-layer Foveon Quattro sensor and exceptional lens, but it all goes awry at ISO 1600 and above – sensitivities that conventional APS-C sensors can handle easily.



Best results are obtained from shooting raw, but this requires working with Sigma Photo Pro software, which is very slow at processing files and generally awkward to use.

With their oddball design, the Quattro twins appear likely to appeal only to a select group of enthusiast photographers who value the astounding image quality of these cameras.

Sony Cyber-shot DSC RX100 III

The third iteration of the popular **RX100** series is the best yet



SONY turned the enthusiast compact camera class on its head with the RX100 – a pocketable camera with a large 1in sensor. The third model in the line, the RX100 III, comes with several new standout features. The first is a much more consistently fast lens in the form of a 24-70mm (equivalent) f/1.8-2.8 optic. Second is a hinged LCD that can rotate 180° to face forwards for selfies. However, the most striking feature is a built-in EVF that pops up out of the top-plate. Impressively, these all add little to the size, and while the RX100 III is a little thicker than previous versions, it's still quite pocketable. The camera uses the same 1in, 20-million-pixel sensor as its

At a glance

- 20.2-million-pixel, 1in Exmor R CMOS sensor
- 24-70mm (equivalent) f/1.8-2.8 lens
- ISO 125-25,600
- 3in, 1.23-million-dot tilting LCD
- 1.44-million-dot electronic viewfinder
- 10fps continuous shooting
- £700
- Tested: AP 5 July

predecessor, which offers excellent image quality. However, video quality has been dramatically improved by the use of a full-frame readout approach that results in higher resolution.

The RX100 III does have a few flaws. For example, its click-less lens control ring offers no tactile feedback when changing settings. The RX100 III now faces very strong competition from the similar Canon PowerShot G7 X, which, among other things, has a longer lens. Yet while the G7 X has arguably better controls for shooting stills, the RX100 III is the better choice for those who are serious about video.



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